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The Pirates' Wake: A Geography of Piracy and Pirates as Geographers in Colonial Spanish America, 1536-1718. (Volumes I and II).

Peter Reppert Galvin

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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**The pirates' wake: A geography of piracy and pirates as
geographers in colonial Spanish America, 1538-1718. (Volumes I
and II)**

Galvin, Peter Reppert, Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

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THE PIRATES' WAKE
A GEOGRAPHY OF PIRACY
AND PIRATES AS GEOGRAPHERS
IN
COLONIAL SPANISH AMERICA

1536-1718

VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by
Peter R. Galvin
B.S., Purdue University, 1980
M.A., University of Washington, 1985
December 1991

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Above all, I thank my wife, Lucinda Woodward, for everything she did--and did without--while I was chasing pirates in another age. To her I dedicate whatever value this work may contain.

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To the members of the Louisiana State University Alumni Association I am much obliged for generous financial endorsement. I also thank my employers and colleagues at St. Norbert College for their patience and support.

Finally, but not least, I acknowledge my parents, Ralph and Virginia Galvin, whose wisdom and nurturing will always be my greatest education.

FOREWORD

They came to think that human geography and history were really quite different subjects, not different approaches to the same problem...

--Carl Sauer
"Foreword to Historical Geography"
(1941, 4)

I preface this dissertation with a few comments about my intentions in writing it and begin with a note especially for historians and geographers. Of historical geography, J.B. Mitchell wrote in 1954: "Some feel that it is an unsound attempt by geographers to explain history, and think that the historical geographer is most certainly trespassing and probably should be prosecuted." The work of historical geographers has since contributed much toward vindicating their species of scholarship, but confusion still attaches to the subject. Because, ideally, a doctoral thesis should represent its author's competence and attainments in that course of study which he has followed and aspires to practice, the question of disciplinary concordance is of no small account. This study of piracy begins as a historical geography and ends as a history of geography. Its content and method are essentially geographical, but many of its sources and much of its inspiration were historical. As its author, I have often felt a mild scholarly identity crisis of the sort a child born out of wedlock might experience. Consider an allegorical elaboration of the predicament:

A comely peasant woman (let us call her G) has borne the illegitimate son of a distinguished nobleman (let us call him H). The code of Academia forbids their marriage or any formal acknowledgment of the parentage, though one wonders what their future might have been together had they slipped away to another realm. The mother carefully nurtures the boy and raises him with grace and discipline, but she never mentions the father. Perhaps her silence owes to propriety, perhaps to spite, or perhaps to a sense of protectiveness for herself and her child. Meanwhile, the son becomes a man. He has assumed his mother's customs, her mannerisms--and her name--yet he knows he does not quite belong. People comment: But isn't young G quite the ringer for H? Eventually his paternity becomes clear to him. Curiosity about the father haunts him. Perhaps, secretly, he begins to emulate him. How alike are they? If they were to pass in the street, what would be their reaction? Would their eyes embrace, if only momentarily, in tender recognition of that part in one which is replicated in the other? Or would they sooner, abruptly be averted as G and H hurry, self-consciously, along their respective paths?

Thus, though I am no historian, I acknowledge my debt to that discipline. Some fine histories about piracy in Spanish America and elsewhere have already been written and were used extensively for the present compilation, but it is not my intention to offer yet another. Rather, it is my hope that this geographical analysis will complement the work of historians while constituting in itself a particular application of geography toward a better understanding of

piracy. As Richard Hartshorne pointed out in concurrence with Alfred Hettner, to study the past dynamics of a region (in this case, the development of piracy in colonial Spanish America), the geographer may depend largely, even wholly, upon the historical record (1961, 185). Recalling the ideas of Immanuel Kant and Ralph Brown, he further contended that despite such reliance upon historical materials, and indeed in some measure upon historical methods, "to check and interpret the historical records of geographical material requires the knowledge and abilities of the trained geographer...[whose] production--the ultimate test--is essentially different in character from that which any historian could or would have produced" (187).

I have included what I deemed sufficient historical background for the reader and have respected chronological sequence whenever that seemed purposeful, but the overriding structure of the work is chorological. The double-entendre of *Pirates' Wake* in the title reflects a dichotomous approach within the text. First, I have sought to retrace the long-vanished trail of those rovers to ascertain where they went and why they went there. My goal has not only been to make overall spatial sense of the pirates' locations and movements, but also to reconstruct particular places associated with them in as life-like a picture as possible, occasionally with the aid of contemporary maps and engravings. In this respect, the centerpiece of the present work emerged as a full chapter on Tortuga--a tiny, nearly forgotten island--but in many respects the fulcrum of piracy in Spanish America.

To quote Carl Sauer once again, "The first step in reconstruction of past stages...is mastery of its written documents. The discovery of contemporaneous maps is the first thing hoped for, but rarely realized" (1941, 13). In this last respect, I was fortunate. Originally, my sole consideration had been to sort out spatially the roving of the pirates, but as my research progressed, I began to realize that they left more than just a fascinating trail for geographical scrutiny. Through their voyages and marches over remote seas and terrain, pirates took active part in the discovery and exploration of the New World. Furthermore, they left valuable, tangible chronicles and charts to convey their findings to posterity. My second objective then became to salute, long after their demise, the contributions of the pirates toward increased geographical awareness. I doubt that many of these ruffians would have called themselves geographers (although a few did formally study the subject), and I wonder if many of my colleagues would care to welcome them (even posthumously) into the same profession. But I cannot resist labeling them as such while celebrating their geographical legacy--journals, maps, and place names--in happy compliance with Mitchell's enjoinder that "the study of the progress of geographical discovery and the growth of geographical knowledge must always be an essential part of the historical geographer's field" (1954, 15). Although I would certainly classify this second avenue of research as history of geography rather than historical geography per se, I would also argue that reviewing past perceptions of places enhances reconstruction of the places themselves.

My final comment here concerns the popular image of pirates. Perhaps no other group of adventurers has been romanticized to such an extreme. The boundary between fact and fiction is often blurred in this area of research, and I have endeavored to base my conclusions only on fact. I must admit, however, that it was the fanciful portrayal of piracy which first attracted me to the subject, and it is not without regret if I detract from that illusion. So, with hats off to Defoe, Stevenson, and Walt Disney, I trust that the reader will decide, as I have, that the spectacle of the truth rivals that of the romance.

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ABSTRACT

This geographical study of piracy in Spanish America spans from 1536, the beginning date of sustained piratical activity there, to the near dispersion of pirate forces by 1718. It identifies and relates the operations of sixteenth-century corsairs such as Francois Drake, seventeenth-century buccaneers such as Henry Morgan, and eighteenth-century freebooters such as 'Blackbeard'. Regional coverage focuses on Middle America with an occasional foray into the South Sea. The principal national agents considered are English, French, Dutch, and Spanish.

The study begins by deriving a working definition of pirates and examining precedent spatial approaches by Henry Mainwaring, Ellen Semple, and Derwent Whittlesey. The remainder divides essentially into three parts.

The first addresses those physical, situational, and geopolitical factors which influenced the spatial development of piracy in Spanish America. That pattern is described in terms of pirate routes as they evolved in the Caribbean and Pacific; major targeted Spanish entrepôts such as Havana, Cartagena, Panamá, Porto Bello, Vera Cruz, and Acapulco; pirate refuges and rendezvous such as Juan Fernández, the Bay Islands, and the Galápagos; and buccaneer strongholds including Providence Island, Curaçao, Tortuga, Port Royal (Jamaica), and New Providence (Bahamas). The pirates' interaction with the natural environment, especially along pirate coasts defined by turtling grounds, careening sites, and logwood

stands are considered as are the Spaniards' implementations of convoy routes, fortifications, and changes in settlement.

Secondly, detailed historical reconstruction of Tortuga, north of Hispaniola--the region's premier pirate stronghold--occupies the focal position of this work. Herein described are Tortuga's history as a pirate base and its most infamous buccaneers, its physical site and situation, and the cultural climate which generated the piratical Brethren of the Coast.

The third component evaluates the contributions of pirates themselves to the advancement of geographical knowledge. A comparison of their charts and journals exemplifies pirates' participation in the discovery and exploration of the New World. Particular emphasis on maps by William Dampier, Basil Ringrose, Lionel Wafer, Ambrose Cowley, and Alexandre Exquemelin highlights the cartographic achievements of the buccaneers.

Chapter 1

AN ANCIENT PROFESSION REACHES THE NEW WORLD

**PIRACY, *n.* Commerce without its folly-swaddles,
just as God made it.**

**--Ambrose Bierce
The Devil's Dictionary
(1942 [1906])**

Preliminary Discussion

Piracy is an age-old occupation¹ which has been practiced in many parts of the world. To write a comprehensive geography of the subject, covering all of its global manifestations throughout history, would require many years of research. Such a compendium would no doubt yield fascinating comparisons for analysis, but would exceed by far the scope of this study. The ensuing work centers on the Caribbean, historically the scene of intense cultural interchange and conflict in which piracy played an early and crucial role. Most of those places to be considered lie within the region of Middle America, an area defined by West and Augelli (1976, xiv) to include modern-day Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies (Antilles and Bahamas). The term **Spanish America**² is nevertheless employed in the title for two reasons. First, it allows for an occasional pursuit of the pirates into South American waters. More importantly, it focuses attention on the Spanish Americans, if their mother country's claim to sovereignty in the New World bore any credence, as the victims of piracy; and that relationship assumes critical significance both for defining pirates and, consequently, for choosing the historical starting point of this study.

By the seventeenth century, the Caribbean was rapidly becoming the most complex arena of international rivalry in the New World, and the national diversity of the pirates reflected the intricacy of that struggle. Ideally, an objective, comprehensive treatment of piracy in the region would address the actions and national viewpoints associated not only with the Spanish defenders, but also

with pirates of Portuguese, Basque, French, Flemish, Dutch, Danish, Brandenburger, English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Colonial North American, and even Spanish origins. The roles of native-Indian and imported-African peoples, exploited both as precious commodities and as important combative allies by either side, would also demand careful consideration. Further complicating the picture would be the recognition that the national allegiance of the pirates, if any, was often transitory and always self-serving.

The scope of the present attempt and therefore its objectivity, to some extent, have necessarily been restricted by the time, resources, and linguistic capabilities at the disposal of the author. Within those constraints, I have endeavored to remain as unbiased as possible in methodology of research and presentation, while recognizing that the national and linguistic composition of my sources has no doubt fundamentally affected the flavor and content of my study. For native Anglophones, including Americans, it is difficult to resist identifying at the very outset with the British pirates. That tendency, as Paul Hoffman has pointed out, emerges at the deepest cultural level and has prejudiced even scholarly applications (1980, 1-2). I have represented the actions of Spain and her three most successful piratical contenders: France, England, and Holland. To do so I have consulted both primary and secondary records concerning each of these groups either in their respective languages or through translations. Nevertheless, I have relied heavily, especially for manuscript material, upon English sources and must consequently acknowledge a potential for bias in my work.

Determining exactly which historical figures or groups of people qualify as having been pirates poses a complex question. The meaning of the word pirate, which entails legal, moral, and cultural dimensions, is further complicated by association of the term with numerous synonyms, each with a particular connotation and application. My use of the word pirate in conjunction with various related expressions incorporates ideas from previous authors and derives from certain assumptions. One could begin by consulting dictionary-definitions of pirate³ and find that its widest, most common usage denotes a maritime-based robber who, whether on water or land, forcefully and illegally extracts the property of others. Were that the sole criterion, one might well argue that a historical geography of piracy in Spanish America should open with the piratical aggressions of the Spaniards against the Native Americans. Here I have bowed to European historical convention, however, and presume that the Spanish acquisition of New World territories was an act of conquest, not piracy.

If we recognize, at least for the moment, Spain's assertion of sovereignty west of the Tordesillas Line,⁴ then the story of piracy in Spanish America begins with the arrival of those first European vessels that crossed the line to plunder Spanish wealth. The Portuguese, it is true, were the first to challenge Spain's monopoly of trade with her own colonies. Portuguese interlopers visited Hispaniola as early as 1514 (Hoffman 1980, 27), and continued a busy, yet peaceful, contraband traffic in Spanish American waters thereafter. These were smugglers, however, rather than pirates, albeit that distinction at times becomes a hazy one. The English

also attempted at least one early incursion, the entry of a single ship at Santo Domingo in the year 1527,⁵ which, though probably instigated at least in part for military reconnaissance, proved more an unsuccessful overture to trade than a prelude to piracy.⁶ The English, moreover, did not return to the West Indies until 1563, when John Hawkins approached Hispaniola in yet another attempt to initiate commerce.

The first deliberate, belligerent attempts to divest the Spaniards of their riches in the New World began with attacks from France. Ships from that and other nations had already begun intercepting the return of Spanish vessels, particularly in the Atlantic Triangle which connects the Azores and Canaries with the Strait of Gibraltar, by the early sixteenth century. Cruising off the Azores in 1523, French-owned vessels⁷ captured two galleons richly laden with Mexican treasures sent by Cortés to apprise the Spanish Crown of its American bonanza (Newton 1933, 48). The cargo of gold, jewels, and exotic finery no doubt encouraged the French to strike closer to the source. In 1528, French raiders plundered and set fire to San Germán, a Spanish settlement on the west coast of Puerto Rico (Andrews 1978, 65). That isolated foray constituted a relatively minor incident, but in 1536, the French renewed their assaults with unprecedented, sustained vigor (Hoffman 1980, 20). It is therefore from this point, when piracy grappled firmly onto Spanish American sea lanes, that the current analysis should begin. Those early French raids, however, like many of the successive aggressions which I will term piratical, though perpetrated by private concerns rather than royal navies, occurred nevertheless

during periods of intermittent warfare with Spain. Should they then be treated as acts of piracy or of patriotism? The answer necessitates a return to the matter of definition.

Even lexicographic entries appear to reflect differing cultural perspectives on the subject. The Spanish definition of *pirata* in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* provides the most general description with the fewest qualifications: "*Ladron que anda robando por el mar*" (1984, 1067--translation: thief who comes robbing by sea). By contrast, a British entry from *The Oxford English Dictionary* introduces an interesting stipulation by defining piracy as "The practice or crime of robbery and depredation on the sea or navigable rivers, etc., or by descent from the sea upon the coast, by persons not holding a commission from an established civilized state" (1961, 900--emphasis added). Considerable ambiguity arises from this definition. When, for example, is piracy a mere practice instead of a crime? and what constitutes a civilized state? The most important departure from the Spanish interpretation of piracy, however, hinges on the issue of the commission.

State-operated navies large enough to ensure national security did not develop in Europe until the eighteenth century, so royal commissions had long been granted for private mariners to attack and plunder designated enemies. Such individuals or their vessels were called **privateers**;⁸ and official state documents, or **letters of marque**,⁹ were issued to sanction (and supposedly regulate) their activities. Even during peacetime, such letters were commonly awarded to merchants as compensation for losses suffered from

foreign attacks at sea. These merchants would then outfit armed vessels to take prizes from the guilty nation and recoup the value of the lost goods. This arrangement, perhaps reasonable enough, was bound to degenerate for several reasons. Above all, there was no enforceable restriction against excess and abuse. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, privateering became a profitable business venture in Europe; members of the gentry would invest large sums in outfitting such expeditions, the crews for which were retained under the agreement of "no prey: no pay"¹⁰ (Gosse 1950, 343). By the latter seventeenth century, letters of marque against Spain's shipping and possessions in the West Indies were circulated and carried out so indiscriminately that any distinction between pirate and privateer became virtually eclipsed.¹¹ Colonial governors, who might issue commissions for a price,¹² certainly looked after their own share of the booty. Moreover, such credentials could also be inherited, borrowed, stolen, forged, or outdated by several years (Williams 1961, 125). Although it is true that for centuries the French, English, and Dutch privateers proved indispensable to their countries during wars with Spain, in peacetime they were reluctant to cease their operations (Williams 1961, 89; Gosse 1924, 10).¹³ An account by William Dampier describes the various means by which his fellow adventurers obtained letters of marque:

It hath been usual for many Years past, for the Governour of *P. Guayres* to send blank Commissions to Sea by many of his Captains, with Orders to dispose of them to whom they saw convenient... Captain *Davis* accepted of one, having before only an old Commission, which fell to him by Inheritance at the decease of Capt. *Cook*; who took it from Captain *Tristian*, together with his Bark... (1927, 136).

Should then privateers, including the sixteenth-century sea dogs among whom Francis Drake remains certainly the most revered, be classified as pirates? Spaniards and Spanish Americans, both then and now, would answer an unequivocal *yes* (Gosse 1924, 15). According to Irene Wright, prolific translator of official Spanish documents relating early English voyages to Spanish America,

to be 'revenged for injury'..., to humiliate their enemies, to insult catholicism..., and, while so doing, to enrich themselves and their principals, was the very different purpose of the men who came after Hawkins, of whom Francis Drake was but one among many of his sort. To the Spaniards they were 'thieves by sea,' ...to whom before the last quarter of the 16th century had ended they applied generally the word "pirate," with no more and no less justice than usually attends its application to commerce destroyers (1932, xvii).

Colombian historian Donaldo Bossa Herazo recently remarked that Francis Drake was no more than "a common pirate," a viewpoint apparently still shared by his fellow *cartagenos* toward all privateers who attacked their city (quoted and reported by McDowell 1989, 501). Privateer or pirate, a man would hang from the same Spanish rope if caught. The real value of the commission was that it protected the bearer from prosecution by his own government or by neutrals; above all, it legitimized the sale of stolen cargo in port (Barbour 1911, 531). French and British historians¹⁴ have likewise lumped pirate and privateer together in the same piratical bag; here, I follow their precedents.

It is not, however, my intention to pass legal or ethical judgment on privateers--or even pirates for that matter. As Philip Means pointed out, both their personal motives and the degree to which their mother countries sanctioned their activities varied

tremendously, not only among persons and groups, but also within the sea careers of individuals (1935, 54-55). Francois Drake, Henry Morgan, William Dampier, Bartholomew Sharp, and Woodes Rogers are but a few examples of many who, over the course of more than two centuries, straddled the line between piracy and patriotism. Some attained royal reward, and a few even accepted government assignments to arrest their former cohorts. Neither do I render moralistic or political support for Spain's proprietary claims in the New World, which were certainly questionable on many grounds. Rather, for the sake of argument only have I assumed legitimacy of Spanish ownership to provide a working definition for piracy and a focus of inquiry. Hence, my discussion of piracy in Spanish America shall address both uncondoned and state-commissioned acts of marine-based, forceful extraction of Spanish property by private parties. With that guideline and the foregoing limitations of scope in mind, only the clarification of certain terms associated with piracy remains to be made.

Although cognates for pirate exist in Spanish, English, French, and Dutch,¹⁵ these are often euphemistically supplanted in the literature by various, more-or-less synonymous expressions. Like *privateer* (which I will attach throughout only to commissioned individuals), some of these can convey special meanings, so their use in the subsequent text is explained as follows:

Corsair: As defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, this word refers primarily to the Barbary pirates of the Mediterranean Sea, but can also be used more generally to mean pirate, privateer, or vessel thereof (1961, 1025; cf. Gosse 1981, 71). In French and

Spanish, however, its cognates¹⁶ evoke essentially the same meaning that privateer holds in English. Following the precedents of Means (1935) and Hoffman (1980), I will use *corsair* to denote all the French, English, and Dutch raiders, commissioned or not, who threatened Spanish possessions during the sixteenth century. Also relevant to this period is the term *sea dog*, usually used in conjunction with the Elizabethan corsairs.

Buccaneer. The evolution of this term, various forms of which exist in French, English, Spanish, and Dutch, in itself constitutes an interesting study in cultural exchange. The original buccaneers were hunters rather than pirates, a motley mix of French, English, and Dutch drifters who began congregating on the remote shores of northern Hispaniola during the early seventeenth century. By adopting a kind of Caribbean-Indian grill, or *boucan*, for preserving meat, these hunters became known as *boucaniers* among the French, or *buccaneers* in English.¹⁷ Eventually they turned to piracy, and as their ranks swelled, the term was applied at large to the swarm of primarily French, English, and Dutch sea raiders operating in Spanish America. Many were at least nominally commissioned, and their attacks were generally confined to Spanish targets. Although the French, in particular, have tended to identify *boucanier* only with the hunters described above,¹⁸ its cognates in English and Spanish,¹⁹ have become more synonymous with pirate. Incorporating guidelines set forth by Gosse (1981), I will use *buccaneer* specifically in reference to seventeenth-century²⁰ pirates whose operations, which frequently included overland assaults, were principally directed against Spanish possessions in

the Americas. It should be noted that, while many of the later buccaneer-recruits never practiced the art of the *boucan*, it was common to vary cruising life with cattle hunting (Burney 1891, 50-51). The phrase **Brethren of the Coast** (*Frères de la Côte* in French), indicative of a certain internal social cohesion which developed among members of this international fringe group, is associated exclusively with the buccaneers (Gosse 1981; Kemp and Lloyd 1960). The Dutch, it is worth mentioning, also assumed a cognate, *boekanier*, but the term of preference in that language has been *zee-roover*, literally equivalent to *sea rover*²¹ (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 3).

Freebooter. In English, this is perhaps the word most broadly interchangeable with pirate. Like its Dutch progenitor, *vrijbuiter*, it has long denoted one who literally makes free with booty--a pirate--in the least restricted sense of the word. The French version, *flibustier*, which apparently derived from unsuccessful pronunciation of the English, has generally meant the equivalent of buccaneer in the piratical sense used above.²² From French, it was eventually adapted by the Spaniards, as *filibustero*, which was finally rendered back into English as *filibuster*.²³ These last two usually describe American adventurers of a more recent era, men like William Walker, who actively promoted military attempts to overthrow Latin American governments during the nineteenth century. The original term **freebooter** finds a useful place in the present study, however, for it best describes the kind of pirate still menacing Spanish American waters well after the dispersal of the buccaneers. These were the infamous pirates of the

eighteenth century--Blackbeard, Bartholomew Roberts, and the like--who unlike their buccaneer predecessors carried neither the commission nor the tacit approval of any government.²⁴ Though Spanish wealth remained a significant target, these freebooting mavericks considered the ships²⁵ of any nation equally suitable prey. At least one author has applied the name *picaaroon*²⁶ exclusively to the eighteenth-century freebooters of Spanish America (Hill 1971).

Still other terms and phrases are associated with piracy. Particularly euphemistic expressions connect its practitioners with the sweet trade, or being at the seas, or going on the account (Mitchell 1976, 14). But the three principal labels discussed above--*corsair*, *buccaneer*, and *freebooter*--retain particular significance in the present study for two reasons. In sequence, they embody an important qualitative transition²⁷ in Spanish American piracy from arguably borderline legitimacy to undeniably flagrant criminality. Moreover, each encapsulates one of three historical intervals which conveniently divide the period under study. Generalizations about spatial continuity and differentiation can then be made with respect to corsairs of the latter sixteenth century, buccaneers of the seventeenth century, and freebooters of the early eighteenth century in the so-called **Golden Age of Piracy**.²⁸

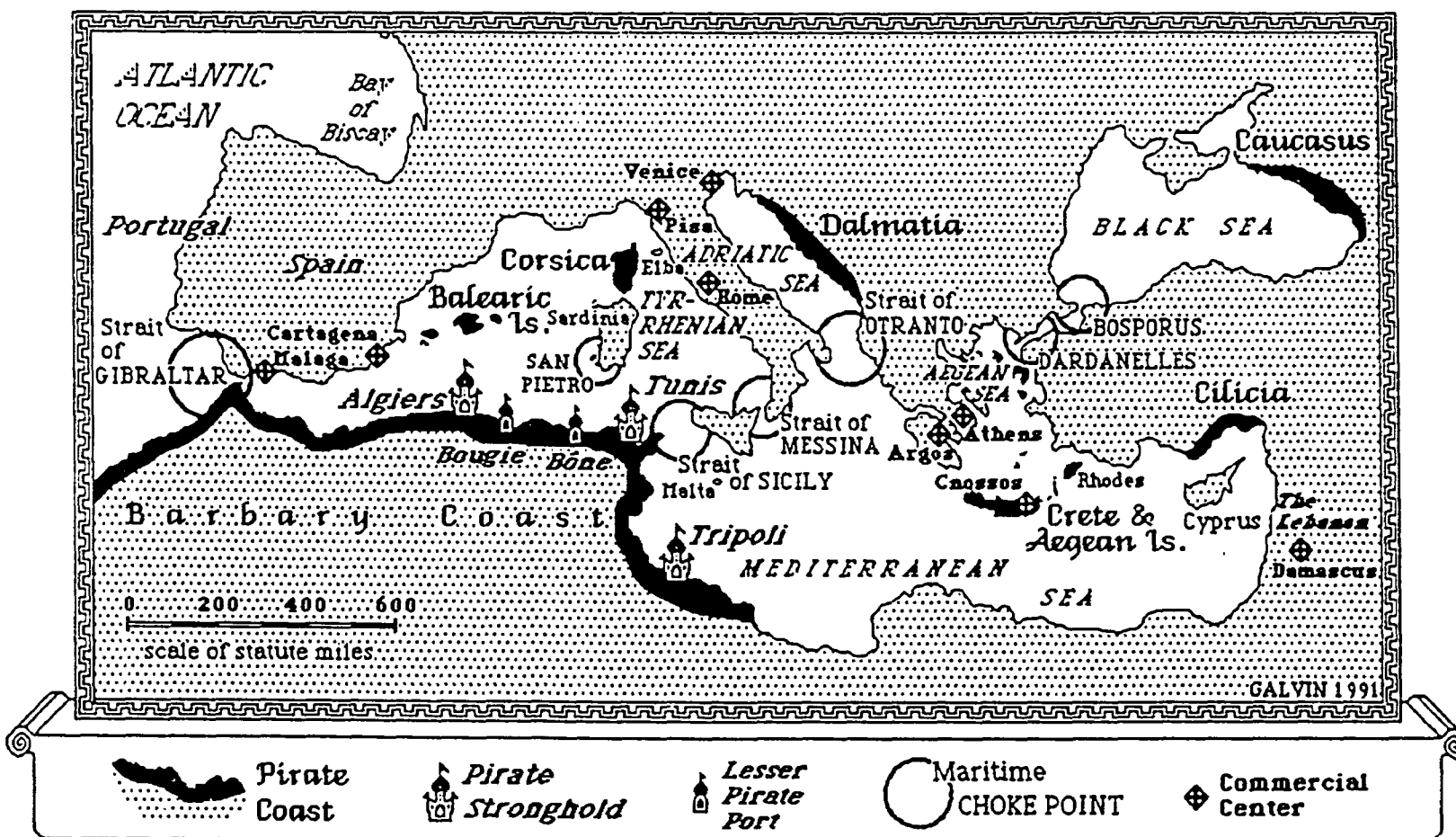
Neither piracy nor the spatial patterns associated with it abruptly disappeared from Spanish America by 1718, the historical endpoint of this study. Events in that year, however, did signal a marked suppression of piracy in the region thereafter. We will

examine those historical developments, but first the necessity of reviewing precedent geographical analyses of piracy removes us to a much earlier cradle of the crime, the narrow seas of Europe, particularly in the Mediterranean Basin.

Geographers' Views on Piracy

Several geographers have found occasion to mention piracy within the context of their regional studies; likewise have most historians of piracy referred frequently to places attaching to their subject. What is conspicuously lacking in the literature, however, is a thorough geographical examination of piracy. In the course of the present research, I have found only three works which would qualify as geographical treatises wherein the emphasis hinges on such spatial factors as site, situation, environmental interaction, patterns, and regions. All three focus on the Mediterranean, but these are nevertheless valuable to the present study because they suggest principles for wider application and provide models with which to compare developments in Spanish America. The first work, a short exposé on the piracy of his day, was written not by a professional geographer, but rather by the corsair-turned-courtier, Sir Henry Mainwaring, in 1617. Three hundred years later, Ellen Churchill Semple published an article which provided the first analysis of piracy that I have found by an academic geographer. In 1939, Derwent Whittlesey followed suit with

a short description of pirate coasts in a text on political geography. Dispensing with most of the regional particularities detailed within them, we shall examine each of these works and transfer as many concepts as prove useful to our own concern with Spanish America. For the location of key place names mentioned, however, the reader should refer to the following map of Mediterranean piracy (Map 1).



Map 1: Piracy in the Mediterranean, from Antiquity through the Seventeenth Century
(Based on the observations of Mainwaring, Semple, and Whittlesey)

Mainwaring's Discourse on Piracy

Henry Mainwaring, an English captain who operated chiefly in the Mediterranean Sea and off the Atlantic coasts of Europe, sailed as a pirate in the early seventeenth century. In 1614 he ventured to the shores of Newfoundland, where he raided the fishing fleet for men, food, and supplies (Gosse 1924, 202), but that was the extent of his roving in the New World. Eventually he obtained both pardon and knighthood from James I, to whom he dedicated, in 1618, a manuscript copy of a discourse headed "Of the Beginnings, Practices, and Suppression of the Pirates."²⁹ This document may have encouraged James to launch a squadron, commanded by Mainwaring himself, in an attempt to squelch piracy on the Barbary Coast (202). The expedition proved a failure, but the same strategy of sending a thief to catch thieves was repeated by later English monarchs as a means of suppressing piracy in the Caribbean.³⁰ Mainwaring's treatise is divided into five parts. The first describes generally those conditions at the time which encouraged piracy in and around British waters. The second considers reasons why individual seamen turned to piracy. The third very briefly describes the methods by which pirate vessels gave chase and overtook their prey. The fourth relates in detail the daily needs and activities of pirates. The fifth, in summation, suggests those steps deemed necessary for the king to extinguish piracy. Aside from relaying many particularities of places and people encountered in his former career, none directly pertaining to Spanish America, Mainwaring attempted to analyze piracy in the context of its geographical milieu. In the first part he explained how the placement and configuration of the British

Isles encouraged piracy among his countrymen, allowing them remote havens from which to fit out, observe shipping, and strike--then back to which they could recoil with relative impunity. Mainwaring underscored the importance of Ireland, for example, in terms of site and situation:

...it may well be called the Nursery and Storehouse of the Pirates, in regard of the general good entertainment they receive there; supply of victuals and men which continually repair thither out of England to meet with Pirates. As also, for that they have as good or rather better intelligence where your Majesty's Ships are, than contrariwise they shall have of the Pirates. In regard of the benefit the Country receives by the one, and the prejudice, or incumber as they count it, of the other. Unto which must also be added the conveniency of the place, being that the South, the West, and the North Coasts, are so full of places and Harbours without command, that a Pirate being of any reasonable force, may do what he listeth (1922, 15-16).

Such labyrinthine coasts as comprise not only the western margin of Ireland, but also of Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall, characterize many other notorious pirate haunts farther abroad. These remote havens not only afforded refuge to pirates, but also allowed locals (at exaggerated rates of exchange) to provision them clandestinely with stores, food, and ammunition (17). Indeed, pirates traded and smuggled as often as they robbed and could not have functioned without the help of indigenous populations who were, if not also sympathetic, at least business minded.

It is the fourth part of the treatise, for which Mainwaring apologized if seeming "somewhat tedious to your Highness" (25), that contains morsels of information of the very type relished by geographers. Here the old corsair recounted the ordinary pursuits which shaped pirate life: "Where and at what times they used to be where they must water, ballast, wood, trim their ships, and sell

their goods" (13). What makes this section interesting is that it exposes how such an extraordinary lifestyle in fact demanded so much attention to mundane exertions. Without naming all of the places (mostly Mediterranean) recorded here, it will prove instructive to examine the types of activities described in selected locations, how these related to the physical environment, and how they influenced the spatial character of piracy. These same types of relationships will later apply to Spanish America as well.

In the Mediterranean, as in the Caribbean, the complex arrangement of straits, islands, capes, harbors, winds, and currents resulted in a relatively constricted and predictable network of shipping routes. As sea predators, pirates were thus aided by the region's maritime physiography in trapping their mercantile quarry;³¹ as mariners themselves, however, they also paid heed to the natural demands of the sea. The general circulation of winds and currents in the Mediterranean is counterclockwise. Vessels entering through the Strait of Gibraltar kept close to the North African coast, while those plying westward sailed along the "Christian" (European) side (26). According to Mainwaring,

At Tetuan, the first town on the Barbary side going in, a Pirate may water well, have good refreshing, buy store of powder... and sell their goods well which is quickly landed and dispatched by reason of the Boats of the town, but here is no command but to ride upon their guard;³² they ride also in foul ground³³ and must perforce put to Sea if the Levant³⁴ come here...

At Formentera by Ivisa³⁵ is water, wood, and ballast, but nothing else, being no inhabitants. They must shift Roads as the winds are either Easterly or Westerly, which they must do by putting through betwixt the Islands wherein the best of the channel is 3 fathom water (26-7).

Within the above passage are mentioned some important place characteristics of concern to pirates, namely, the physical and military safety of harbors; local wind direction and channel depth; availability of food, fresh water, wood for fuel and nautical uses; and convenient markets in which to sell stolen cargoes or barter for ammunition and other necessities. When unable to steal or trade for victuals, or when forced to hide out in some remote island, the pirates were accustomed to living off the land. Mainwaring spoke of foraging in the Canaries for "young hawks and pigeons" (36), as well as goats (37), and of lying low "at Desertas by the Madeiras... [to] water and perchance get some Beeves there" (36).

Yet another constant concern was careening, or cleaning the hull of the ship, which was, as Mainwaring put it, "a mighty inconvenience to Pirates" (31). While undergoing such maintenance, their vessels, half-hoisted out of the water, remained extremely vulnerable both to foul weather and chance encounters with enemies. Hence the pirates sought harbors protected either by their seclusion or by allied guns for careening. Mainwaring cited Porto Farina, nestled in the Gulf of Tunis, as providing "very good watering, and a good place to careen in, being Land-looked" (29).

Pirates did not simply rove about on the open sea hoping to fall upon unsuspecting prey. Either they targeted minor, unfortified ports such as Velez Malaga, Jávea, Alicante, or Cullera on the coast of Spain, where prizes might easily be taken at anchor (30), or they positioned themselves in the road of heavier shipping, usually near some constricted passageway (called "choke points" in modern military jargon) defined by capes, straits, and islands.

Some strategic ambush points mentioned by Mainwaring included: off capes de Gata and de Palos, overlooking access to Gibraltar and shipping from Malaga and Cartagena along the southeast coast of Spain; San Pietro, an islet off the southwest coast of Sardinia; Cape Passero, commanding the channel between Sicily and Malta; in the Strait of Otranto, intercepting Venetian traffic between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas; and off the eastern tip of Crete or any number of the Greek islands (26-8).

The pirates migrated seasonally between hunting waters in response to the cyclical shifting of winds and ocean commerce. Mainwaring thus described the pirates' movements on the Atlantic side of Gibraltar:

Without the Straits for the most part, all Pirates do resort to the coast of Spain and Portugal for purchase, and there according to the times of the year do lie off of one place or other; from the midst of February to the last of March, they commonly lie South and South-south-west of Cape St. Maries,³⁶ some 20 or 30 leagues off, for Indies men outward bound. And generally February, March, April, and May, they keep the coast of Spain, in which months those that look for Straits men homeward bound, lie 20 leagues off Cape St. Vincent west...

From the midst of May, till the midst of August, they are seldom on the coast, as well for that, in those fair seasons, the Spanish and Flemish men of war do more diligently keep the Seas than in winter weather; and these times they commonly spend amongst the South or West Islands,³⁷ and from thence...to the Bank of Newfoundland (31-3).

Lastly, Mainwaring described a type of place essential to the long-term establishment of piracy in any region: the pirate stronghold. During his career, two such bases ensconced on the Barbary Coast dominated the Mediterranean scene: "there is not any place for Pirates to resort to, but only Algiers and Tunis, where

they may be fitted with all manner of provisions and to ride safely from the Christian forces" (25). Algiers offered a protective inner harbor and a commanding citadel of over 200 guns (29, 29n). Its influence extended directly through the subsidiary ports of Bône and Bougie (27). Tunis (as ancient Carthage before) had always pressed hard its piratical thumb on the Sicilian Channel,³⁸ that commercial lifeline threading through the slender waist of the Mediterranean. Its harbor, not fully warranted by its castle, was nonetheless easily safeguarded by one or two warships. Tripoli afforded a third fortified haven on the Barbary Coast, but its entrance channel and inhabitants apparently proved too dangerous even for pirates (29). Pirate ports supplied not only protection, but also men, provisions, and ammunition to outfit ships. In addition, they provided markets for plundered goods and various recreational diversions on which to spend the gains. More importantly, these strongholds constituted established regional forces, powerful nexuses which exerted influence far beyond their own ramparts. Mainwaring stressed repeatedly how letters from Algiers or Tunis would guarantee safe reception of the pirates by locals, even as far away as Rhodes and Cyprus (28-29). He even advised King James to maintain good relations with those cities because, in the case of renewed war between England and Spain, there would be "no place for our Merchants that trade that way to relieve themselves in any distress betwixt Sicily and Gibraltar so convenient as those places" (31). Now let us turn from the first-hand observations of the pirate to notes made by a famous academic geographer three centuries later.

Semple's Analysis of Pirate Coasts

At the height of World War I, in 1916, Ellen Churchill Semple published her article, "Pirate Coasts of the Mediterranean Sea" in *The Geographical Review*. She introduced her observations with an interesting and timely comparison:

It is a significant parallel that the German and Austrian submarines, the commerce destroyers of the present war, frequent the same hunting-grounds in the Mediterranean as the ancient and mediaeval corsairs. They have been operating in...the broad avenue leading to the Gibraltar gate; along the marine highway between Spain and the Balearic Isles...; in and about the Sicilian Strait, where converge all lines of traffic between the eastern and the western basins; in the Strait of Otranto and the long Adriatic lane; [and] in Cretan waters...

Although Semple concentrated on ancient developments, beginning with the Cretans, Greeks, Phoenicians, and Etruscans, many of the spatial manifestations of piracy she described were still enacted, as related above, by Mainwaring's contemporaries.³⁹ Nevertheless, from her conclusions we can add to our inventory of geographic elements which have characterized piracy. One basic effect she discussed was the location of settlements, both by pirates and, as a response, by their victims.

Pirates favored "promontories...and utilized them as pirate strongholds from which to conduct their depredations" (Semple 1916, 136). Islands, particularly small, mountainous ones, also attracted pirate settlements. Corsica, in Semple's view, exemplified "all the physical qualifications for chronic piracy":

[I]ts rugged relief, poor soil, indented coastline, and location on marine trade routes..., [compounded by its] small geographical area, limited population, and political dismemberment, due to its physical dismemberment, all combined to weaken the island and make it a ready prey... (146).

Those molested by pirates sought similar outposts as a first defense; thus in ancient times was the promontory of Soilla fortified to prevent Etruscan depredations near the Strait of Messina, and the island of Elba was militarily occupied to thwart piracy in the Tyrrhenian Sea (146). To safeguard their commercial and residential settlements, however, beleaguered coastal folk retreated inland, especially in times of intense looting. Fear of piratical raids compelled coastal settlers of ancient Greece to locate cities such as Mycenae, Argos, and Athens up to ten miles inland. Likewise before had the Minoans placed Cnossos and, afterwards, even the Etruscans, who initially "either avoided the coast or merely built fortifications there as defenses against pirates," placed Pisa (136). In periods of increased maritime commerce, when powerful navies were able to suppress piracy, coastal traders sought more direct access to the sea. Settlements sprang up on the outer coastal fringe, often functioning as port outlets for centers already established inland. Hence evolved "twin cities, port and capital, such as Rome and Ostia..., Athens and the Piraeus"--the latter pair connected by long walls (137). But when naval control waned and pirates renewed their vigor, exposed coastal populations withdrew once more from the sea; "[t]hus the southern littoral of Italy, which was the site of flourishing seaboard settlements during the period of Greek colonial expansion, became wellnigh depopulated during the Middle Ages, owing to the century-long attacks of... pirates" (137).

Perhaps Semple's largest contribution to a geographical understanding of piracy lay in her descriptive analysis, indicated

by the article's title, of "pirate coasts." Mainwaring, we noted, had suggested that the physical configuration of the Irish coast predisposed its inhabitants to sea robbery. Semple, arguing from a characteristically deterministic stance, contended more forcefully that the physical geography of certain Mediterranean coastal regions "condemned" these to become "natural breeding places for corsairs" (138). According to Semple, several factors of the environment converged to create the pirate coast. It typically evolved along a shoreline where mountains plunged abruptly into the sea. Such a rugged, broken interface between land and water afforded few agricultural opportunities and precluded concentrated populations or effective centralized government. Everything conspired to turn the inhabitants of such a coast seaward. The forested mountain slopes provided timber, especially straight-barked conifers, for ship building. Though the locals might attempt to derive a legitimate subsistence from fishing, the slightest population pressure could overtax their precarious food supply and drive them to illegal maritime pursuits farther afield. This incentive toward piracy was exacerbated on islands, such as Corsica, where land was the most limited. It also prevailed, however, on continental coasts which were effectively cut off by the mountains from the hinterland, or where the hinterland remained unproductive because of aridity. Both these conditions applied in the case of the Barbary Coast, blocked from the Saharan interior by the Atlas Mountains. Such irregular coasts further encouraged piracy, as already noted, by providing a confusion of secluded inlets and channels for evasion, as well as isolated, fortifiable headlands from which to spot prizes (138-41).

Semple likened the robber mentality of these coastal denizens to that of various mountain, steppe, and desert tribes who augmented their meager existence by pillaging neighboring agricultural communities. She further pointed to examples of just such peoples who, upon expanding their influence to the sea, quickly swapped "the desert camel and the steppe pony for the swift-moving ship" (138).

Pirate coasts had to lie, of course, within striking distance of lucrative trade lanes (141), preferably in reach of an important choke point. Combining all of the above geographic criteria with the historical record, Semple was able to identify several pirate coasts in the Mediterranean realm. These included most of coastal Asia Minor, many of the Aegean islands, Crete, the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea, the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic, the Barbary Coast of North Africa, the Balearic Islands, and Corsica (139). Among all these she singled out Cilicia, on the southern coast of Asia Minor, as the pirates' "acropolis":

Nature had equipped it with every physical facility for the trade—timber, harbors, signal stations, coast fortresses, impregnable mountain retreats. Moreover, its location, remote and inaccessible from the weak Seleucid capital, had placed it beyond reach of the arm of authority...(143).

For all her characteristic emphasis on natural parameters, Semple did temper a deterministic view with recognition of certain social factors which could override the physical milieu. The Lebanon, she explained, though possessing "all the geographic conditions for a pirate coast," never became one as long as legitimate trade with Damascus and Mesopotamia proved more lucrative than piracy (140). Moreover, strong regional maritime powers, such as evolved under the Delian League of Greece or Pompey's Roman navy,

could suppress piratical outbreaks, at least for a time. Finally, of course, the success of pirates depended on patterns set by wind-driven sailing technology: "what whipped them," Semple concluded (determinist to the last), "was steam navigation. Their rugged coasts could not breed mechanics and engineers" (151).

Whittlesey's Comments on Piracy and Maritime Strategy

Writing in the foreshadow of World War II, Derwent Whittlesey included a subsequent geographical treatment of piracy in his landmark text on political geography, *The Earth and the State* (1939). In the chapter entitled "The Mediterranean Realm," he included, without really adding anything new, what constitutes only a brief synopsis of Semple's ideas⁴⁰ about pirate coasts (241).⁴¹ From the same volume, however, what will enlarge on the present discussion are Whittlesey's remarks concerning maritime strategy. His analysis of "islands as springboards" (59-65) holds particular relevance to the geography of piracy.

So far we have considered the utility of islands in terms of their defensibility, relative isolation, and strategic relationship to choke points. Islands provided pirates with hideouts, lookouts, and retreats, but as such aided only sporadic, static belligerence. When piratical tendencies were harnessed to serve a larger menace--and pirates did form the vanguard of French, English, and Dutch penetration into colonial Spanish America--then islands assumed a more active and threatening role, described by Whittlesey as "springboards":

Islands figure far more conspicuously than either their size or their resources appear to warrant. Their qualities of unity, isolation, and strategic location lend them this political significance. Islands fringing the coasts of continents in process of being breached, make ideal advance bases for expanding political power (59-60).

Furthermore:

A far more intimate relation of island to mainland persists between islands close to shore...and the hinterland. At the outset such islands can be utilized as natural defense points. They are small enough to be easily conquered and effectively controlled by little groups of invading mariners... Once firmly ensconced in fortified positions on the island, the interlopers make it a base of operations against the mainland, and a haven in case of forced retreat... If it lies in a river mouth or near the mainland shore it shelters a belt of calm waters in which the ships...can safely anchor, and across which forces attacking the mainland can easily make their way (60).

Whittlesey then went on to classify such offshore islands, and it is noteworthy that he reckoned "rocky outliers"--the very type favored by pirates--as "least common and most prized" (61).

We have examined three spatial appraisals of piracy which focused on the Mediterranean experience and have extracted such elements and relationships as might prove generically explanatory to a geography of piracy. The next task is to use this conceptual framework in developing a new model to describe the Spanish American experience.

Notes

¹ An eminent authority on the subject, Philip Gosse, even contended (no doubt with tongue in cheek) that "piracy must surely be the third oldest profession in the world" (1924, 11). Dr. Gosse, coincidentally a physician like some of the buccaneer-authors he studied, reckoned the art of healing as the world's second oldest profession.

² The term Spanish America appears infrequently in geographies and gazetteers as a regional designation. De Sola (1975, 530) defined it as the "Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas" which include "every country once ruled by Spain from Mexico in the north to Chile in the south with the exception of British Honduras, Jamaica, Guyana, the Haitian section of Hispaniola, French Guiana, and Brazil." My own use of the term is similar, though in the context of the historical starting point of this study, I exclude only that territory recognized by Spain as rightfully Portuguese. In other words, I use Spanish America to encompass colonial Middle and South America, with the exception of Portuguese-held Brazil. One might well argue that, whether based on modern linguistic distribution or historical settlement, regional discussion of Spanish America ought to include places of Spanish settlement in North America (e.g. parts of Florida and California). Some of these areas were certainly subject to piracy but are not included in this study.

³ Definitions from *The Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* are quoted later in this chapter.

⁴ Drawn by Pope Alexander VI, the Line was accepted under treaty by Spain and Portugal in 1494 to divide between them ownership in the New World. Located 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, the Papal Line fell at about 50 degrees west longitude, setting off a large section of modern Brazil.

⁵ The commander of this vessel may have been John Rut, sent by Henry VIII in 1527 to seek a northwest passage to the orient (Newton 1933, 49); but Spanish accounts of the English ship which visited Santo Domingo that same year include no mention its captain's name (Wright 1929).

⁶ The Spaniards at Santo Domingo, faced with the novel and unprecedented English intrusion, reacted with suspicion and hostility; but in none of the related Spanish documents translated by Wright (1929, 29-59) are the Englishmen labeled as pirates.

⁷ Commanded by Jean Fleury, the fleet was owned by Jean d'Ango of Dieppe (Newton 1933, 48).

⁸ The word privateer came into colloquial use in mid-seventeenth century England as a shorter expression for private man-of-war. In *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1961, 1389) it is defined as "An armed vessel [or commander/crew member thereof] owned and officered by private persons, and holding a commission from the government, called 'letters of marque', authorizing the owners to use it against a hostile nation, and especially in the capture of merchant shipping".

⁹ The earliest recorded issue of a letter of marque in England was in the year 1293 (Gosse 1950, 341n).

¹⁰ A variant on the motto was "no purchase, no pay" (see, for example, Winston 1969).

¹¹ According to William Dampier, most of the French commissions issued in his day were mere licenses to hunt game on Hispaniola, but these were used as "a pretense for a general ravage in any part of America, by Sea or Land" (1927, 137). Gosse related similar abuse of an officiously florid Danish document sold by the governor of St. Thomas (1924, 10).

¹² Governor Modyford of Jamaica, for example, frequently sold commissions for twenty pounds apiece (Williams 1961, 125).

¹³ With the accession of James I to the throne, England ended its long naval warfare against Spain. Peace brought unemployment to thousands of discharged sailors who consequently turned pirate. Privateers also continued their maraudings under wartime letters of marque despite a royal decree of June 1603 ordering them to desist. Within ten years their combined numbers had multiplied tenfold (Williams 1961, 89).

¹⁴ Although a titular distinction has often been maintained, especially by contemporary chroniclers, modern historians of piracy have tended to place both in the same class of sea felon. Compare, for example, Besson (1928), La Villestreux (1930), Masefield (1922), Gosse (1924), and Means (1935).

¹⁵ In Spanish, *pirata*; French, *pirate*; Dutch, *piraat*.

¹⁶ In the *Grand Larousse de la langue française* (1973, 998), for example, *corsaire* primarily denotes an armed vessel, or captain/crewman thereof, officially authorized by the government to cruise against and capture the merchant shipping of an enemy in time of war. Likewise, in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Español* (1984, 387), *corsario*, refers to ships, captains, or crewmen licensed by their own governments to go roving.

17 According to Kemp and Lloyd, the word *buccaneer* does not appear in English documents produced before the end of the seventeenth century (1960, 2). Among English colonists from Nevis and St. Christopher, they were known in the 1630s as "Cow Killers" and feared for their savagery (Harlow 1925, 16).

18 As indicated in the *Grand Larousse*, even modern use of *boucanier* specifies primarily the former wild-beef hunters of the Antilles who preserved their meat with smoking. Secondary use of the word to mean pirate results from "confusion" with *flibustier* (1973, 474). According to Exquemelin, who lived among both the pirates and hunters of Hispaniola, the French attached the name *boucanier* only to hunters of wild bulls (1972, 45; 1967, 35). I will follow this convention by reserving the French term *boucanier* to distinguish any specific reference to hunters, as opposed to discussion of the piratical buccaneers. Use of the word *flibustier* is discussed later in this chapter.

19 *Bucanero* is defined in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Español* as "*Pirata que en los siglos XVII y XVIII se entregaba a saqueo de las posesiones españolas de ultramar*" (1984, 218).

20 Although Gosse included eighteenth-century pirates in his definition of buccaneer, he stated in the same article that the buccaneers disbanded after the siege of Cartagena in 1697 (1981, 74-5). In a definitive history of the buccaneers, Clarence Haring had previously suggested that "With the capture of Cartagena in 1697 the history of the buccaneers may be said to end" (1910, 266).

21 First written in Dutch, the original title of Exquemelin's *Buccaneers of America*, was *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers* (1678). The modern Dutch spelling is *zeerover*.

22 *Flibustier*, according to the *Grand Larousse*, denotes "*Aux XVII^e et XVIII^e s., aventurier appartenant à une association de pirates de la mer des Antilles, dont l'activité était dirigée surtout contre les possessions espagnoles*" (1973, 1984). This meaning is identical with that of *bucanero* in Spanish or buccaneer in English. The adoption of the word by Frenchmen on Tortuga to distinguish pirates from hunters (*boucaniers*) is described in the 1686 French edition of Exquemelin (see 1967, 35). Burney explained this interesting linguistic crossover by pointing out that on Tortuga, while most of the original hunters were French, the majority of the men cruising against the Spaniards were English (Burney 1891, 51). Newton perpetuated the notion that the French called their buccaneer-pirates *flibustiers* "because they were accustomed to use light craft like the Dutch 'fly-boats' in their attacks upon the Spanish

vessels" (1933, 169), but that view is not widely shared. Burney had previously discounted the idea for two reasons: "First, the word 'flyboat' is only an English translation of the Dutch word 'fluyt'...Secondly, it would not very readily occur to anyone to purchase Dutch fluyts, or flyboats, for chasing vessels" (1891, 50). Charlevoix had addressed the derivation of *flibustier* in his history of 1733 and concurred with the origin from freebooter (tom.3, 8-9).

²³ A peculiarly American application of *filibuster* describes the delivery of a prolonged oration to obstruct legislative proceedings. This attachment of the piratical to the political is perhaps not too surprising; Ambrose Bierce defined corsair as "a politician of the seas"! (1942, 57).

²⁴ As defined in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, a freebooter "goes about plundering without the authority of national warfare"--let alone an official commission (1981, 905).

²⁵ These pirates further differed from the buccaneers of the previous century in that they relied mostly on ship-to-ship combat, rather than land maneuvers.

²⁶ *Picaroon* derives from the Spanish *picaro*, meaning rogue. In English, its general association with piracy is quite old; however Richard Hill, in his book entitled *The Picaroons*, stated that "Freebooting--or, as foreigners mis-pronounce it, fillibustering--at this period...became not so much the bold hazard of the Buccaneer as the piracy of the Picaroon.... In 1700 we arrive at the incidents of the Picaroon period" (1971, 10).

²⁷ Rolando Velasquez similarly considered the qualitative and historical connotations of Spanish terminology in "*Bucaneros, Piratas, Filibusteros: su Diferenciación y Transiciones*" (1956).

²⁸ See, for example, Hugh Rankin's *The Golden Age of Piracy* (1969). The phrase has also been used by Lloyd (in Johnson 1962, 9), Botting (1978, 21), and Lee (1974, 3).

²⁹ There are at least ten manuscript copies of Mainwaring's discourse. For a complete bibliography, consult the introduction to the Navy Records Society publication of the one dedicated to James I (edited by G.E. Manwaring and W.G. Perrin, 1922); this is the version used here.

³⁰ Most notably employed to this end were the ex-buccaneer Henry Morgan, who instigated the crown's first serious efforts to curb his former cohorts, and the ex-privateer Woodes Rogers, who cleaned out

the last nest of pirates by the close of the period under study. Bartholomew Sharp also was dispatched with a naval commission to intercept buccaneers, but he quickly turned again to roving himself.

³¹ See Ellen Churchill Semple's concurrence in note 39, below.

³² By which was meant that there was no friendly fort to protect them while at anchor.

³³ i.e. dangerously shallow and rocky coastal waters.

³⁴ A levanter (or Levantine) is a strong easterly Mediterranean wind. Blowing counter to the normal North African current, such an occurrence could have grounded them.

³⁵ Of the Balearic Islands.

³⁶ Cape Santa Maria.

³⁷ Canaries and Azores.

³⁸ Variouslly called the Strait of Sicily (Sicilian Strait) or the Tunisian Channel.

³⁹ Semple also emphasized the coastal physiography of the Mediterranean as responsible for recurrent waves of piracy whenever a dominant maritime power was lacking in the region:

The stable factors tending constantly to produce this phenomenon are to be found in the geographic conditions obtaining in the Mediterranean. Owing to the configuration of the basin, traffic was compressed into certain narrow trade routes. These threaded their way between island and peninsula, entered sub-basins by the only possible gateway of the strait... Thus traffic was restricted to fixed lines in a way impossible on the open ocean.

The sea hunter, therefore, knew various points where he was sure to bag his game (1916, 135).

⁴⁰ In 1931, Semple had consolidated her articles about the Mediterranean in her last book, *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: Its Relation to Ancient History*, published by Henry Holt, New York.

⁴¹ For the sake of completeness and comparison, I have included Whittlesey's passage about pirate coasts below:

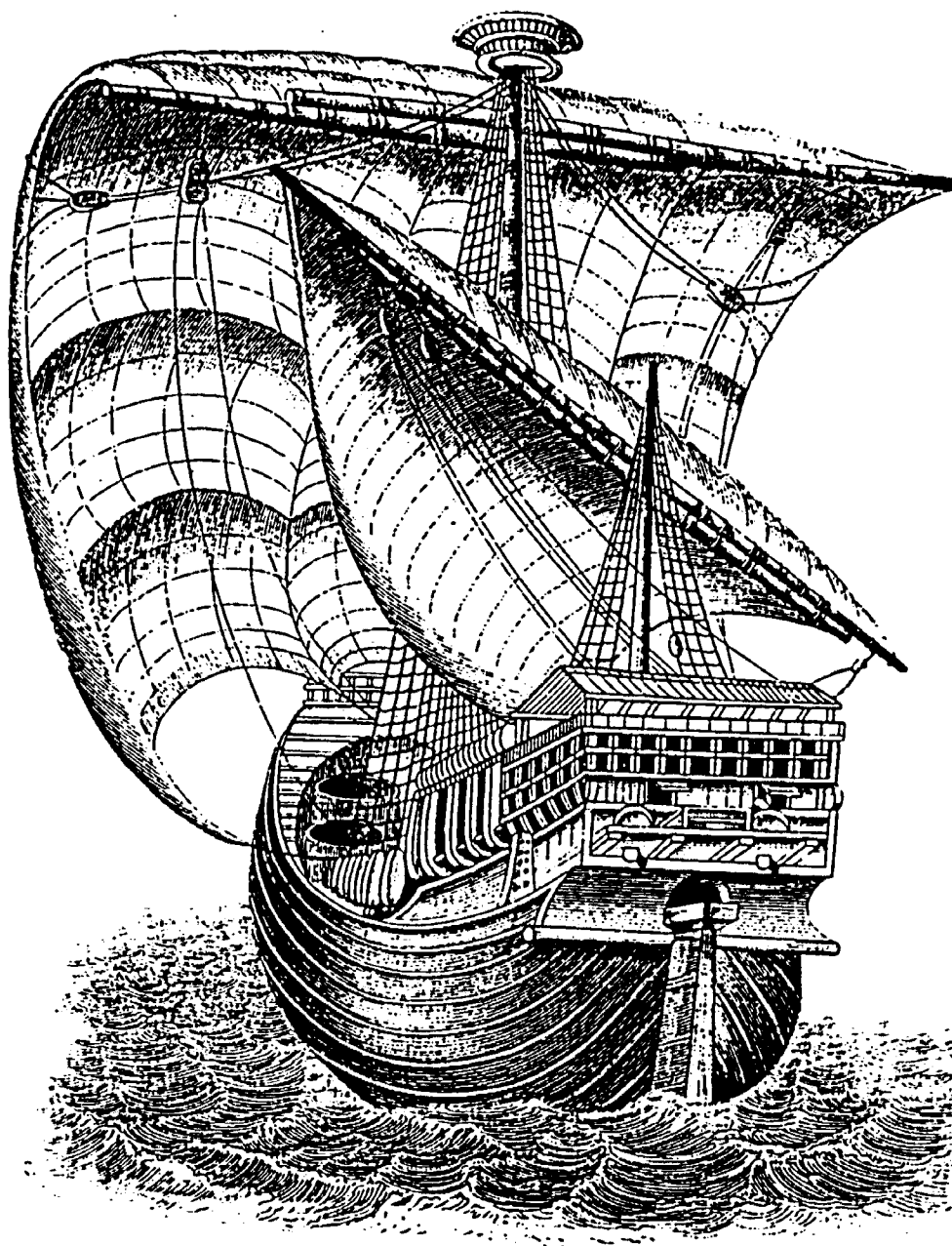
Where ranges of mountains parallel to the coast have been partly drowned, the coastal waters form labyrinths of inlets and canals among peninsulas and islands. These waters may be shallow or deep, but their access to the hinterland is difficult. The mountain flank, exposed to the sea, bears forests, including conifers, and these, aside from fisheries, are the only resource upon which the inhabitants can rely. With ample wood for shipbuilding and dependent on fishing for a livelihood, the people of such coasts have from time immemorial been proficient in the arts of navigation, and have undertaken to supplement their meager resources by raiding the shipping of more favored folk. Classic corsair coasts are Dalmatia..., Barbary, and two faces of Anatolia--most of the north coast, and on the south, Rugged Cilicia. Denizens of these coasts have recurrently damaged the shipping of maritime states so heavily as to force them, rivals though they were, to organize into political leagues powerful enough to cope with privateering. Such leagues have characterized Mediterranean politics from Minoan times to the 19th century, when the national state superseded the traditional city-state as the dominant form of political organization. Either alone or with allies, ancient Rhodes and Athens, medieval Venice and Genoa, modern France and Britain have by turns undertaken the extirpation of Mediterranean pirates, but until a generation ago, only Rome succeeded. Today pirate coasts have lost their advantages. Lacking iron and coal, their inhabitants cannot build or run steel steamships. Even if they had modern fighting ships, many of the hideouts would be too shallow to accommodate them. Merchantmen, relatively independent of winds and currents, can avoid many pirate lairs and can often outsail marauders, while fast warships can track them down (1939, 141).

Chapter 2

PATTERNS OF PREY IN SPANISH AMERICA

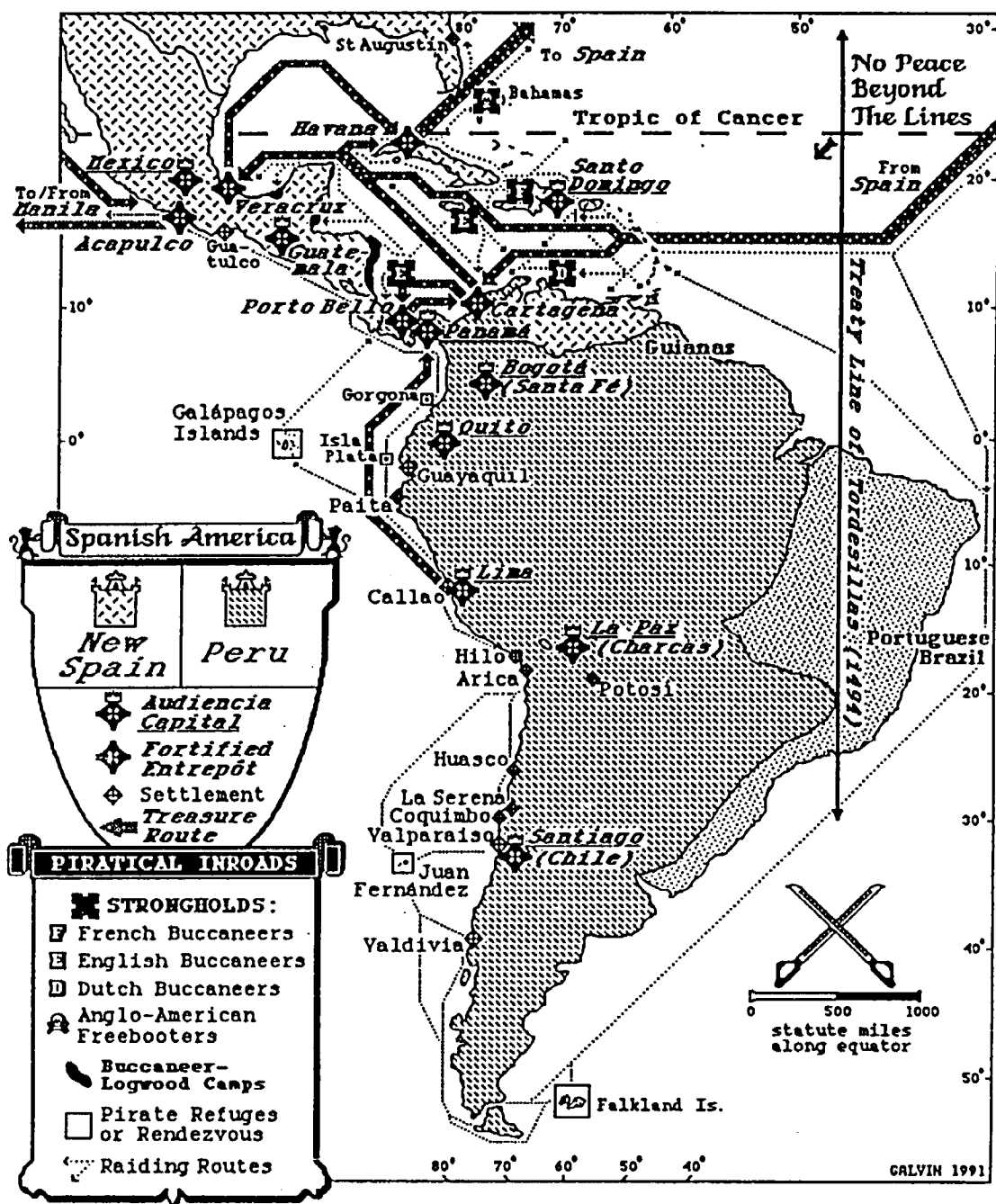
Trade it may help, society extend,
But lures the Pirate, and corrupts the friend

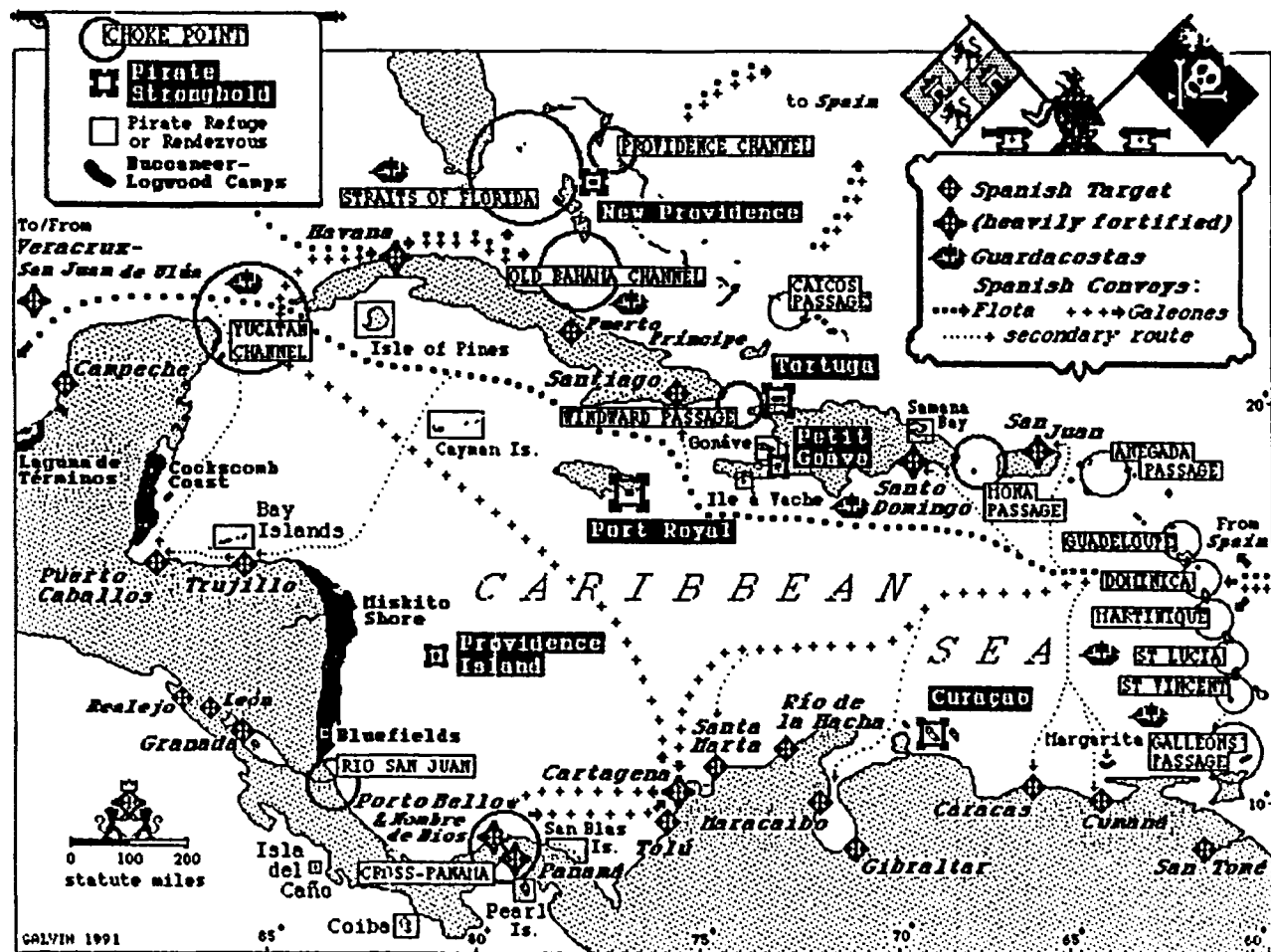
--Alexander Pope
Moral Essays
(Ep. III L. 29)



**Figure 1: Late Fifteenth-Century Carrack-Prototype
of the First Spanish Treasure Ships**

(from Peterson 1975)





Map 3: Caribbean Core of Piracy in Spanish America, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century

The New Scene of an Old Crime

Although Hispaniola lay over four thousand miles¹ from the Pillars of Hercules, piracy in the New World was in other respects not so far removed from its earlier, Mediterranean manifestation. In a highly generalized sense, one could almost envision the Caribbean-Gulf enclosed by the Americas as a mirror image of the tri-continental seas engulfed by the Old World. Eastern oceanic access to the Caribbean terminated in the expansive Gulf of Mexico, while the western entrance to the Mediterranean threaded ultimately to the commodious Black Sea. In describing the pirate coasts of the Mediterranean, Ellen Churchill Semple suggested a direct parallel to our present concern with Spanish America:

The pirate was the robber of the sea highways; and the highways of the Mediterranean were well defined and well traveled. The Oriental commerce in slaves and luxuries yielded such rich plunder to the freebooters, as it passed through Cretan waters between the Peloponnesus and Cyrenaica, that the pirates called this 'the golden sea.' Just such geographically determined routes attracted the buccaneers of the American Mediterranean in the seventeenth century, as they swarmed out of their hiding places in the Antilles, to seize the gold and silver freight of the homebound Spanish caravels or the useful cargoes of the outbound ships. Here Jamaica, owing to its location, played the part of Crete as an advantageous piratical base; for it commanded several marine passages into the Caribbean Sea and was within striking distance of the Spanish treasure ships as they left the Isthmus of Panama and the Mexican ports (1916, 135).

It is indeed tempting to pair key places in the 'American Mediterranean' with strategic counterparts in the Old World. Thus has Tortuga been likened to Malta (Thrower 1980, 136), and the Bay of Samana's Isla Levantado been dubbed the "Gibraltar of the Buccaneers" (Verrill 1923, 195). But Spanish American piracy was no

mere reenactment of the Mediterranean stage; and although we will find ample opportunity to apply the observations of Mainwaring, Semple, and Whittlesey to a new regional setting, it is important to bear in mind fundamental geographical differences which distinguished piracy in the New World.

To begin with, although the interior Mediterranean was riddled with numerous choke points, oceanic access to that sea was through a single strait; Gibraltar's dominance contributed greatly to the rise of the Barbary pirates as the leading menace to maritime commerce by Mainwaring's day. The multi-insular shield of the Gulf and Caribbean, by contrast, could be breached from the Atlantic through several portals, though some were far more important than others. Moreover, the relatively narrow Central American land bridge, so readily traversable at the Isthmus of Panama, encouraged overland extension of piratical ventures into a vast new ocean and coasts ripe with vulnerable pickings. American piracy thus developed a strong amphibious nature that culminated in the complex sea-and-land maneuvers of the buccaneers. In addition, the latitudinal shift from subtropical Mediterranean waters to tropical American seas meant a substantial difference in seasonality, living conditions, and sailing patterns. Finally, American piracy burst into a new historic era and geographic realm. Unlike the slow evolutionary processes by which Semple explained the development of Old World piracy, the American species sprang to life from a mature transplant, blossoming after a mere century into the widespread but ephemeral depredations of the buccaneers, and withering within a comparable span into near extinction. In this respect, even should

we accept Semple's determinist premises, we must recognize piracy in Spanish America, though clearly interactive with the physical environment, more as a product of society than of nature. The utter devastation of the region's native population consequent to the Spanish Conquest left a completely new arena for European exploitation. While piracy in the Old World lingered amid population pressures, long-established territorial powers, and familiar hunting grounds, piracy in Spanish America emerged as part of a colonial scramble for relatively unsettled lands and uncharted waters. The product was fundamentally different. Nevertheless, with these important qualifications in mind, we will find that many of the same geographic exigencies of commerce and commerce destroyers which typified the Mediterranean experience provoked a similar response in Spanish America.

In this chapter we will survey geographic conditions which influenced Spanish American piracy during our period of study. Many of the same categorical relationships identified by Mainwaring, Semple, and Whittlesey will contribute to the framework of analysis. These include the effects of the region's maritime configuration, its winds, currents, and strategic choke points; the establishment of Spanish trade routes and the consequent deployment of pirates; the identification of Spanish coastal targets and the emergence of American-based pirate strongholds; the interaction of pirates with the natural environment while acquiring provisions, maintaining their vessels, and pursuing alternate modes of employment; and the subsequent location of pirate coasts and refuges. Later, in the larger context of the region's historical geography, we can evaluate

the spatial effect of piracy on colonization efforts both by the defending Spaniards and their ingressing competitors. The extent of the region and period under study demands fairly broad treatment at this level, but the information is specifically organized to satisfy two principal objectives. The first is to provide a spatiotemporal frame of reference for understanding piracy in Spanish America. The second, by virtue of comparison with previous geographical studies of the Mediterranean experience, is to extract from a new setting any underlying geographical principles which could point toward a more holistic explanation of piracy. In the subsequent chapter, much more refined application of pertinent historical and geographical details will focus on the piratical evolution of Tortuga.

Invitation to Piracy

Semple and Whittlesey showed that submarines of the First and Second World Wars responded to maritime configurations with a spatial strategy reminiscent of ancient piratical circuits. Likewise, modern geopolitical concerns in the Gulf-Caribbean hinge upon many of the same physical and situational factors which influenced piracy in colonial Spanish America. The Antillean archipelago has been described by geopolitical analysts as "a curving fence with five main gates: the Straits of Florida, the Windward Passage, the Mona Passage, the Anegada Passage, and the Galleon's Passage north of Trinidad" (Anderson 1984, 4; cf. West and

Augelli 1976, 123-25). To these outer gateways can be added the Old Bahama and Providence Channels as well as a dozen other navigable water gaps which punctuate the Bahamas and Lesser Antilles, including the St. Lucia Channel and the Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, and St. Vincent Passages. Interior sea lanes converge most notably at the Yucatán Channel. Under the scenario of modern conventional warfare in the region, these maritime constrictions pose essentially the same strategic vulnerability now as they did in the days of sail, long before the Panama Canal. To complete the list of choke points in colonial Middle America, however, two critical trans-isthmian routes must be added. One was the overland mule-trail and riverine routes which connected Nombre de Dios/Porto Bello with Panamá and the Pacific. The other was the Río San Juan, or Desaguadero, which threaded its way to the Caribbean from Lake Nicaragua and Granada. Map 3 indicates the locations of all these strategic bottlenecks. Their effect, in concert with prevailing winds and currents, manifested itself first in the establishment of a predictable Spanish commercial network, and consequently in the tactics and logistics of the region's pirates.

Three maritime lifelines evolved to connect the treasure and products of Spain's colonies with the mother country in Europe.² The general routes of all three are shown on Map 2; more detailed information about the two Caribbean circuits appears on Map 3. From the western fringe of Spanish America, the most perilous voyage spanned the vast Pacific expanse in an 18,000-nautical-mile course joining the wealth of the Orient to that of New Spain. This was the famous Manila galleons track. Its American terminus lay at

Acapulco, "a town that existed only for trade" on the Pacific coast of New Spain (Lyon 1990, 30). From its heavily fortified harbor, the *naos de la China*, or 'China Ships', plied their way due west laden with Mexican silver to exchange for Asian goods. Even under steady propulsion from the North Equatorial Current and the Northeast Trades, the outward journey might last half a year, with only a stop at the Ladrões (Guam and the Mariana Islands) to vary the monotony en route to the Philippines. Returning from Manila, the galleons stood first to the northeast, attaining a latitude of about forty degrees before steering eastward. Swept by the Kuroshio Current and the Prevailing Westerlies, the China Ships then plotted a straight course for Cape Mendocino, whence the California Current carried them back to Acapulco. Silks, spices, ivory, porcelain, and jade were just a few of the Oriental wares which entered New Spain in this manner. Transported along the 'China Road' via mule teams to the Mexican capital and thence to Vera Cruz (San Juan de Ulúa), these exotic goods eventually reached Spain with the Mexican silver fleet (8-14).

Ever since Cavendish's successful South Sea cruise (1586-88), the fabulous wealth of the Manila galleons sporadically lured marauders to the Pacific coast of New Spain, but the relative inaccessibility of the South Sea constrained most of Spain's piratical foes to the Atlantic side of the Americas. There the Gulf-Caribbean network connected ultimately with Seville via the trade routes established by the *galeones* (or galleons) and the *flota* (Mexican treasure fleet).³ The *galeones* served Tierra Firme and the Spanish Main,⁴ where Porto Bello and Cartagena emerged as the

principal ports of call. The convoy typically consisted of five to eight men-of-war, each bearing forty to fifty guns; several smaller, faster boats called *pataches*; and a fleet of merchantmen, varying in number from year to year. Under a general's command, the galleons left Seville between January and March, cruising south and westward with the Canary and North Equatorial Currents and backed by the Northeast Trades. If they sailed in consort with the Mexico-bound ships, the combined fleets typically entered the Caribbean through the Dominica Passage or a neighboring channel, diverging afterwards toward their respective destinations. If the galleons sailed alone, they might enter through the passage which bears their name, sighting Tobago on the inbound stretch. At this point individual *pataches* and merchantmen could detach from the main convoy to call at Margarita, Cumaná, Caracas, Maracaibo, and Santa Marta. These vessels would later rejoin the *galeones* at Cartagena, the principal entrepôt for the Spanish Main. Its warehouses awaited the annual visitation stocked with indigo, tobacco, and cacao from the Venezuelan coast; pearls from Margarita and Ranchoeria; and emeralds from New Granada. Haring related that goods arrived even from as far as Guatemala, whose merchants were reluctant to route valuables directly to Havana through the pirate-infested Yucatán Channel (1910, 14-16). Porto Bello superseded Nombre de Dios as the Caribbean terminus of the Peruvian-Panama trade before the close of the sixteenth century,⁵ and it was here that the galleons came next. When notified of their arrival in the Indies, the Viceroy of Peru ordered the Armada of the South Sea to escort shipments up the Pacific coast from as far as Chile and Charcas.⁶ Silver flowed from

the mines at Potosí, and the *Navío del Oro* carried gold from Quito and surrounding districts to join the convoy at Paita. From there the Pacific treasure ships voyaged in consort to Panamá, where the overland trek began toward the galleons waiting on the Caribbean side. From Panamá to Porto Bello there were two established routes. The shortest led directly overland via mule trains, or *recuas*, through jungles, swamps, mountains, and unspanned rivers. This path was the more expensive option, traversable only during the dry season. Alternatively, goods could be hauled overland as far as Venta Cruz and then transported in boats down the Río Chagres to the Caribbean within easy reach of Porto Bello (17). The magnitude of the annual fair at Porto Bello, when the galleons arrived from Cartagena to meet the Panama shipment, easily eclipsed the fairs at Cartagena and Vera Cruz. As an entrepôt, Porto Bello commanded the focus not only of Tierra Firme, its immediate hinterland, but of the whole interior Spanish-South American trade (Loosely 1933, 317). It was here that the English priest, Thomas Gage, witnessed "heaps of silver wedges...like heaps of stones in the street" (1928, 368). The precious metals and other Peruvian commodities would be exchanged for Spanish manufactured goods, especially fabrics, oils, spices, wines, paper, glassware, and iron products (Loosley 1933, 323-24). All this commercial zeal unfolded amidst such overcrowding, elevated prices, and rampant disease that Gage dubbed the town "not *Porto bello*, but *Porto malo*" (1928, 369). From here the *galeones* could continue directly to Havana, their last port of call, but by the mid-seventeenth century the Spaniards considered that route's proximity to buccaneer bases at Providence Island and

the Miskito Shore far too dangerous. Instead, they found it safer first to double back to Cartagena with the eastward coastal eddy and then to make for the Yucatán Channel. From Havana, provided they ever reached it, the *galeones* could return to Spain via the Old Bahama Channel or the Straits of Florida. Often they waited to rendezvous with the Mexican convoy for the homeward voyage (Haring 1910, 19-20).

The third maritime artery in Spain's colonial empire was the *flota* for Vera Cruz, or Mexican treasure fleet. This convoy also included a few warships and several merchantmen and often crossed the Atlantic in consort with the *galeones*. Upon entering the Caribbean, usually via Dominica or Guadeloupe, the *flota* veered northeast to skirt the Greater Antilles. En route to the Yucatán Channel and the Gulf beyond, individual merchantmen dropped off to call at San Juan, Santo Domingo, Santiago de Cuba, Trujillo, and Puerto Caballos. The destination for the main body of the *flota* was Vera Cruz, the major port of Mexico. Through this port flowed silver from New Spain and the oriental treasures hauled overland from Acapulco. Like the *galeones*, the *flota* made its final rendezvous at Havana⁷ before returning to Spain.

Such was the ocean-borne mercantile network which connected Spanish America with the mother country. Just as the winds and currents of the Pacific determined the general route of the Manila galleons, so too did the natural circulation of air and water in the Gulf-Caribbean ordain the usual pattern of Spanish trade via the Atlantic. The Northeast Trades with the Canary and North Equatorial Currents facilitated the outbound leg. The voyage from Spain via

the Canaries, through the Lesser-Antillean portals down to the Spanish Main, and thence to Tierra Firme or beyond was a relatively straightforward matter. Getting back out, as historian Paul Hoffman has noted, was entirely more complicated:

Within the Caribbean, the position of the Antilles and the fact that the prevailing trade winds were from the northeast meant that a shipmaster wishing to sail from the north coast of South America (the Spanish Main) far enough north to catch the prevailing westerlies that would take him to the Azores and so to Andalusia had two options: either he could try to beat eastwards against the trade winds (or tempt fate during the periods of variable winds when the trade winds were slack) or make use of the Mona Passage or the Windward Passage, or he could reach across the face of the trade winds to use the Yucatán Channel and Florida Straits. Once on the northern side of the Antilles, the winds were more favorable for his voyage, although the difficulties of navigating the Bahamas and the Bahama Channel diminished the benefit thus gained. Sailing for Europe from the Antilles was somewhat easier than from the Main, but even so many skippers preferred to run westward (downwind with the trade winds) to use either the Windward Passage or the Yucatán Channel rather than try to beat northeast from northern Puerto Rico or eastwards to and through the Mona Passage. In the Gulf of Mexico, prevailing northwesterly winds forced ships [i.e. the *flota*] to sail in a great arc from the coast of New Spain to near the mouths of the Mississippi River and then southeast for the Florida Straits. In short, it was easy to get into the Caribbean, but hard to get out (1980, 5-6).

Though initially plied with some frequency by homeward-bound merchants and retained thereafter as important local shipping routes, the Mona and Windward passages lost much of their significance as strategic bottlenecks for major fleet movements as the Spanish convoy system expanded and developed. By the close of the sixteenth century, treasure fleets traversed the Caribbean with the primary objective of reaching Cartagena or Vera Cruz. The homeward voyage, via Havana, required passage through the Yucatán Channel and the Straits of Florida; these became the most crucial

choke points, all the more tempting to pirates because the ships which negotiated them carried silver and gold (Andrews 1978, 3).

The physical geography of Spanish America--the pattern of winds and currents, the placement of deep-water harbors, and the strategic location of various choke points--together set the basic spatial framework of maritime activity, not just for the Spaniards, but for their piratical contenders as well. Consequently, the early corsairs, who also launched their voyages from European ports, operated essentially within the same maritime constraints as their prey. Moreover, for Spaniard and corsair alike, the seasonal rhythm of the elements conspired to channel hostilities temporally as well as spatially. The Caribbean's autumnal hurricane season, coupled with the tempestuous Atlantic winters, generally compelled the *galeones* and *flota* to embark from Spain in the early spring and late summer, respectively. Should the *galeones* not leave Havana by mid-September, they might overwinter there and sail home with the *flota* the following spring. Vera Cruz, by the same token, often served as winter quarters for the Mexican fleet. The earliest corsairs, no less immune to the perils of hibernal seas, but lacking any friendly port in the New World, also made for Europe no later than the fall (Haring 1910, 14-21; Hoffman 1980, 6-7).

Nature may have provided a complicated set for piracy's debut in the New World, but society choreographed its profane movements across Spanish America with an artistic folly that only humans could provide. The social, or political geography of the great tri-centennial performance commenced with a broad papal gesture taping off the eastern edge of the stage. Such was the famed Tordesillas

Line, that majestic stroke of unexplored longitude by which Pope Alexander VI, in 1494, made proprietors of the Spaniards--and pirates of anyone else--who dared voyage beyond it.⁸ This bit of global geometry engraved not just an arbitrary meridian (near 50° west longitude), but a formal invitation to would-be trespassers. The French monarch, Francis I, formulated his celebrated reply by 1526, when he declared "The sun shines on me as well as on others. I should be very happy to see the clause in Adam's will which excluded me from my share when the world was being divided" (Williams 1963, 207). Within a decade, French corsairs were contesting Spain's acquisition of American riches with more than courtly banter. By 1536, the Spanish Crown found itself committed to the hopeless task of defending the larger portion of an entire hemisphere against piratical transgression. The depredations of the French corsairs only multiplied over the ensuing decades until finally, in 1559, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis brought a glimmer of peace. But the prize of the Americas proved too valuable to be settled by diplomacy, and the agreement, as Sir Alan Burns pointed out, actually served to conventionalize piracy in the region for years to come:

In the discussions that led up to the signing of this treaty, the French insisted on their right to send ships to the West Indies; to this the Spanish could not agree and the difficulty was overcome by an oral agreement, limiting the application of the peace treaty to that part of the world which lay north of the Tropic of Cancer and east of the prime meridian, at that time generally recognised as the meridian of the most westerly of the Azores Islands. These were the 'lines of amity' beyond which peace was not expected--or realised, and this agreement had considerable influence on international relations during the next half-century.⁹

...There was indeed 'no peace beyond the line', and it was taken for granted there would be hostilities in the Caribbean area no matter how friendly international relations might be in Europe. Acts of violence 'beyond the line' were not regarded as acts of war, and atrocities which would have been condemned in the comparatively chivalrous warfare which still existed in Europe were scarcely noticed when they occurred in America (1954, 140-41).

These basic linear boundaries, drawn not in response to any exigencies of nature, but rather as concessions to purely human greed, essentially defined the theater of Spanish American piracy. The French and Spaniards provided the initial *dramatis personae*; all that remained to complete the cast of players was the appearance of the English and the Dutch.

Battle Beyond the Line

Temporally, we can conceptualize piracy in Spanish America in three broad phases, beginning with the corsairs in the early sixteenth century, culminating with the buccaneers by the latter seventeenth century, and declining with the freebooters, or picaroons, within the first few decades of the eighteenth century. Spatially, we can organize our understanding of these maraudings according to those geographic themes already identified by scholars of the Mediterranean experience, viz. favorite routes, lurking places, and coastal targets of the pirates; site and situation of their established strongholds; spatial exigencies posed by the distribution of vital resources and environments; and 'pirate coasts', or areas of chronic piratical activity.

Corsairs

Not surprisingly, raiding patterns of the sixteenth-century corsairs corresponded closely to the growth and flow of Spanish American trade. For two very logical reasons the early pirates olung doggedly to those lifelines of Spanish meroantilism which threaded Gulf and Caribbean waters. Obviously these were the lanes through which the wealth moved; outbound vessels from Spain brought manufactured items, wine, and ammunition while caravels and galleons returned laden with hides, cacao, sugar, cochineal, indigo--and highly coveted cargoes of silver and gold. Moreover, the European-based corsairs in their long-range operations depended on the region's winds, currents, seasons, and choke points to nearly the same degree as did their more cumbersome quarry.

The earliest French raids in Spanish America targeted places where Spanish American wealth, settlement, and commerce were first concentrated--the Greater Antilles. Havana suffered most during this initial phase. Ransomed by a lone Frenchman in 1536,¹⁰ this all-important nexus of Spanish shipping would be pillaged again and again--even more brutally by Jacques de Sores in 1555. Though their maraudings occasionally led to the Main, the henchmen of Jean d'Ango and their like focused mostly on the towns and shipping of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. The pirate-infested waters of the Mona Passage, Yucatán Channel, Florida Straits, and the Bahamas proved particularly dangerous for Spanish merchants, and only the relatively well fortified Antillean ports of Santo Domingo and San Juan (Puerto Rico) remained unscathed by French corsairs (Burns 1954, 139-40; Ashdown 1979, 10; Hoffman 1980, 24-25).

Neither the Spanish Crown nor its American subjects stood idly in the midst of such aggressions, and two defensive measures emerged from the first round of corsair incidents which profoundly influenced the spatial character of the region's piracy. One obvious Spanish response was the construction or improvement of fortifications at key ports. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, as warden of the fortress at Santo Domingo, had already conceived a comprehensive plan of defense works ranging from Dominica (guarding the usual Caribbean entry of Spanish merchants and corsairs alike) to Bermuda and the Strait of Magellan. His suggestions would have incurred enormous expense and therefore went mostly unheeded, but unprecedented losses after 1536 renewed attention to the need for protective structures. New bulwarks reinforced Santo Domingo and San Juan, while initial constructions at Santiago de Cuba and Havana proceeded under the direction of Hernando de Soto. Fortifications consumed the largest share of royal defense monies up to 1548 (Hoffmann 1980, 51-59). These and other early defensive measures for a time helped discourage French raiding in the Antilles, and after 1538 the focus of piracy shifted overseas for a few years, back to the Atlantic Triangle (13, 25).¹¹ Growing treasure centers on the Main, however, ripening prizes like Cartagena and Santa Marta, remained unfortified and terribly vulnerable to attack (55). The second defensive posture assumed by Spain was the implementation of the convoy system. Even as early as 1513, the Casa de Contratación at Seville had seen fit to assign two caravels to protect the Cuban coast, and by 1521 *guarda costas* were patrolling strategic waters in the Caribbean (Barbour 1911, 531). Initially,

Spanish merchantmen could voyage singly to the New World, but losses in the Atlantic Triangle and later in the Caribbean made clear the need for more protective tactics. As early as 1526, ships plying the American trade were ordered to sail in *flotillas* of at least ten, assembling at Seville for the outward voyage and at Santo Domingo for the return. Armed escorts at first conducted merchantmen only through the Atlantic Triangle, but events after 1536 demonstrated the sheer vulnerability of the American sector. Full convoy service between Seville and the Caribbean did not commence until 1542-43 (Hoffman 1980, 27-31). Originally a single treasure fleet engaged the Indies trade, but with the opening of the great silver mines at Potosí, a special convoy system was instigated for Cartagena and Nombre de Dios in 1557.

A royal *cedula* in 1561 made the fleet system mandatory. The Casa de Contratación strictly regulated all shipping such that it passed via convoy between Seville and designated assembly points in Spanish America (Santo Domingo originally, then Cartagena, Nombre de Dios--later Porto Bello, Vera Cruz, and Havana). No merchantman could legally sail alone or deviate from the established network. Thus evolved the Atlantic convoy system of the Mexican *flota* and Panama *galeones* already described (Haring 1910, 12-14). The fleet system indeed reduced risk to individual ships, and no convoy was completely lost to pirates until the Dutch admiral Piet Heyn captured the entire silver fleet at Matanzas Bay, near Havana, in 1628 (Burns 1954, 139-40). The unpredictable whims of the sea, however, frequently unravelled tight sailing formations, and the pirate quickly adopted the tactic of preying on stragglers, much as

a wolf singles out the weakest animal in a herd. The convoy system may well have been the logical response to maritime robbery, but ultimately it encouraged the very piracy it was designed to suppress. Bulky Spanish vessels were easily outmaneuvered, in part owing to their unwieldy construction, but also because merchants, so constrained by limited sailings, were compelled to burden them beyond safe capacity. Above all, however, the convoy system virtually eliminated guess work for pirates. Though the Spaniards took certain pains to vary and conceal the precise schedules and itineraries of annual convoys, their routes were essentially fixed in time and space by winds, currents, seasons, choke points, and strictly limited ports of call. The price for such protection, in short, was predictability.

By the mid-sixteenth century, French corsairs were again roving the Caribbean with renewed vigor. Thanks in part to increased land defenses, merchantmen afloat suffered greater losses than the coastal settlements, but some of the new fortifications, particularly on Cuba, proved woefully inadequate. In the Antilles, the ports of Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Yaguana¹² easily succumbed to the depredations of François le Clerc (known as 'Peg Leg'---or *Pie de Palo* by the Spaniards) and Jacques de Sores. Piratical infestation of the Mona and Windward Passages had prompted Santo Domingo to send out patrols to clear those waters, but the corsairs simply directed more attention to the poorly defended Spanish Main and hitherto unmolested coast of Central America. Both Cartagena and Santa Marta buckled under French attacks in 1543-44 (the latter sacked again by le Clerc in 1554), as did the pearling

center of Cubagua (an islet near Margarita, the larger island itself raided by pirates in 1561) and settlements on the neighboring coast of Venezuela (Burns 1954, 114, 140; Hoffman 1980, 55, 63-67; Watson 1979, 30).

In the latter sixteenth century, the corsairs struck ever westward along the Main, to the Central American isthmus and into the Gulf of Mexico. Nombre de Dios, Trujillo, Puerto Caballos, Campeche, and San Juan de Ulúa (Vera Cruz) numbered among the principal towns brought into the fray after 1561 (Hoffman 1980, 114). The year 1562 brought yet another national contender to Spanish America in the person of John Hawkins, first among Queen Elizabeth's sea dogs to champion English interests in the region. More slave trader than pirate, his initial attempts to break the Spanish trade monopoly in Hispaniola continued till the end of the decade with expeditions farther abroad to Margarita, Río de la Hacha, Santa Marta, and Cartagena. In the latter of these trading voyages he was accompanied by a young protégé named Francis Drake (Burns 1954, 141-52). Though illegal, trade with foreigners was often welcomed by Spanish colonists because the strict mercantilism and saturated markets of their mother country left them desperately short of slaves and manufactured items. Consequently it was not at all uncommon for corsairs to attempt commerce as a preliminary means of profit. Gold, silver, and pearls sometimes changed hands without bloodshed, but cowhides, in particular, found a thriving market with interlopers.

By the latter seventeenth century, corsair trade flourished in the circum-Caribbean wherever cattle were raised. Such areas

spanned the Main from Cumaná to Santa Marta and throughout the Greater Antilles--at least in those districts sufficiently remote from the watchful eyes of administrative officials. Along less developed coasts, particularly those of Central America and the Gulf, the corsair was far more likely to exchange grapeshot for whatever he wanted. Moreover, even where mutually desirable, trade with interlopers remained entirely illegal and potentially dangerous for all parties involved. Corsair-traders, particularly the French and English (in sharp contrast to their Portuguese competitors) were generally prepared to back up trade with brute force or even supplement it with rank pillage. In addition, corsairs often used illicit trading stops to gain intelligence about fleet movements and tempting cargoes for more violent pursuits elsewhere (Hoffman 1980, 114-18). The Spaniards, who had ample reason to distrust and repulse such overtures, therefore sent Hawkins and Drake packing from San Juan de Ulúa with a vengeance in 1568. When the English sea dogs returned to Spanish America, they would do so more single-mindedly as pirates, leaving trade mostly to the French and Dutch (Andrews 1978, 134).

Francis Drake ranked chief among that choleric breed of Elizabethan mariners who scoured the Indies till the century's end for the sake of profit, patriotism, and Protestantism. His name rightfully occupies a prominent place in the annals of piracy, not just for the enormity of his exploits and the longevity of his career, but for the innovativeness of his piratical campaigns which set the standard of pillage for a century to come. During the three years following his ignominious retreat from San Juan de Ulúa, Drake

made two reconnaissance voyages to the Darien coast of Panama, possibly befriending local runaway slaves and familiarizing himself with the coast. Upon choosing a suitably clandestine base, which he named Port Pheasant on account of similar fowl abounding there, he sailed for England to outfit an attack against Nombre de Dios, then the Caribbean terminus of the cross-Panama treasure train. In 1572 he returned to Port Pheasant with two ships and seventy-three men. After assembling three small pinnaces to ply the shallows, the corsairs advanced to the Isle of Pines,¹³ where they succeeded in capturing two small Spanish vessels. In the pre-dawn hours of July 29th, Drake led about seventy men in a surprise attack on Nombre de Dios. After the initial pandemonium, however, the Spaniards lost little time regrouping and forced the invaders back to their boats. The pirates retreated to lick their wounds on a nearby island, being then advised by an escaped slave that the Panama shipment was due within a few months to cross the Isthmus. Drake determined to attack the treasure train overland, but in the meantime availed himself of a few prizes off Cartagena (Burns 1954, 152-53; Williams 1975, 86-92).

By the end of the year, Drake's force was more than halved, and it was at this point that the English activated a critical alliance. By the latter 1560s it was becoming usual on the Panama coast for common (generally Protestant) enemies of Spain to pool resources. French corsairs had long announced their presence, and were now occasionally joined by the English and the newly arrived Dutch in their forays against the Spaniards. The key allies for Drake were not Europeans, however, but a group of escaped African

slaves, known as *cimarrones*.¹⁴ Numerous and fiercely anti-Spanish, renegade Negroes were well acquainted with the local geography and the operations of their former masters (Andrews 1978, 136-39). The *cimarrones* served Drake as informants, guides, and fellow combattants, formidable allies by virtue of their number and bellicosity. With eighteen of his own crew and twenty-five *cimarrones*, Drake set out to capture the treasure-laden mule train as it left Panamá. En route, from atop the high backbone of the Isthmus, Drake caught his first sight of the Pacific Ocean. His careful plan to ambush the treasure train near a way station called Casa de Cruces was foiled, however, by an ill-timed assault sparked by the drunken cupidity of one of his own men. Thus warned, the main body of treasure porters escaped with the goods, and Drake returned to the coast empty handed for all his trouble. He then reverted for a time to coastal harassment, taking prizes from Spanish shipping along the Main.

The bedraggled Englishmen eventually had the good fortune to meet up with a party of French corsairs led by Guillaume le Testu of Le Havre,¹⁵ Huguenot and Norman like many of his piratical compatriots. Finally, in April of 1573, with aid from the French and again from the *cimarrones*, Drake penetrated once more into the jungle near Nombre de Dios and succeeded in overtaking a mule train richly laden with gold and silver plate. Le Testu was killed in the campaign, and Drake returned to England less two brothers and with only a fraction of his original crew; but the voyage, so to speak, had been made (Burns 1954, 154-56; Andrews 1978, 140).



Figure 2: Sir Francis Drake--Arch-Pirate of Spanish America

(Engraved by Thomas de Leu from a portrait by Joseph Rabel. Reprinted in Nuttall 1914)

It was not Drake, but John Oxenham, a comrade-in-arms from the Panama campaign, who returned to cross the Isthmus and become the first pirate to smite the Spaniards in the great South Sea. Now captain of his own ship (though uncommissioned, as Drake had been), Oxenham weighed anchor from Plymouth in April of 1576. Like Drake before him, he carried disassembled pinnaces for close work and shallow waters, for the pirates knew well the value of small craft equipped with oars and sails.¹⁶ Upon reaching the coast of Cartagena, Oxenham retired to a secluded inlet somewhere to the west of that city to set up the pinnaces. With these he managed to take a couple of prizes from coastal traffic before making camp on the Darien coast and negotiating with the local *cimarrones* for assistance. Crossing the Isthmus at the head of some fifty Englishmen and about ten *cimarrones*, Oxenham constructed a forty-five foot pinnace of native cedar with which to enter, completely unannounced, the Bay of Panama on the Pacific side.

Bursting first upon the Pearl Islands in February of 1577, the marauders evidently derived as much pleasure from smashing up Catholic artifacts and intimidating friars as they did from divesting the luckless inhabitants of their valuables. Next sighting Panamá itself, the pirates could surmise from maneuvers there that the city was fully alerted to their presence. Not so the inbound ships, however; these continued to arrive oblivious, unarmed, and richly laden with treasures from Peru. A barque from Guayaquil, yielding a good store of gold, provisions, and gunpowder, made easy plunder. With this booty the pirates were content (especially now that Panamanian waters were getting a bit too hot

for good luck) to strike back across the Isthmus. The infuriated Spaniards followed in vigorous pursuit, and Oxenham's party was eventually cut off from both coasts. Even the booty, which the corsairs had endeavored to hide by burying, was fully recovered by the Spaniards. Eighteen of the Englishmen, including their leader, were taken prisoners and transported to Lima, where Oxenham and his officers were hanged in November of 1580 (Wright, ed. 1932, xlix-lxiii, 109-14, 117-22).

Meanwhile, in 1577, Francis Drake in the *Golden Hind*¹⁷ had sailed again from Plymouth to become the next captain after Magellan to circumnavigate the Earth¹⁸. This momentous expedition opened a new chapter in Spanish American piracy; for by following Magellan's trail to the Pacific, Drake decidedly brought the 'sweet trade' to those vulnerable shores he had only been able to covet from the heights of Panama--and which Oxenham had merely singed before he himself was snuffed out.

Striking the Spaniards first at Valparaiso, Drake wended his way northward, taking valuable prizes from Arica and Callao, the maritime outlet for Lima.¹⁹ The most lucrative catch was the *Cacafuego*,²⁰ bound for Panamá laden with gold and silver, which he overtook near Cape San Francisco. Past the Golfo Dulce, off the coast of modern Costa Rica, Drake chanced upon a prize of a different sort. The English had just made the Isla del Caño, thereafter a favorite resort of pirates because of its plentiful fresh water, wood, fish, turtle, wild hogs, and coconuts.²¹ Opposite the tiny island, the *Hind* was careening in a small bay (now named for the ship's captain) when some of Drake's crew in a pinnace

overtook a barque bound from the Gulf of Nicoya for Panamá. Aside from its ordinary cargo of maize, lumber, sarsaparilla, and honey, the barque carried two pilots of the Manila track who possessed detailed charts and rutters of the little-known Pacific route. Drake, after sacking the minor Mexican port of Guatuloo²² and exploring awhile along the Californian coast, set westward across the Pacific with his newly acquired Spanish charts. He ultimately returned to Plymouth in 1580; and the following year Queen Elizabeth knighted her pirate-explorer aboard the same vessel which had girded the Earth and left terrorized Spaniards in its wake (Andrews 1967, 62-81; Gerhard 1960, 64-66).

A massive force of ships and men assembled under Drake in 1585 to wound Spanish America systematically at its Caribbean heart. England and Spain were as yet not officially at war, but Elizabeth offered a free rein to privateers and financiers willing to risk lives or capital to advance the cause of England (and enrich themselves) at Spain's expense. Sir Francis now operated more legitimately as the queen's admiral, though his formal commission by no means authorized the extent of depredations to come. The true objectives of the sea dogs became evident enough. Most desirable was the capture of the treasure fleet, but Drake's swarm missed the return of the Mexican *flota* by more than a fortnight, and the inbound Panama galleons as well, if only by a few days. Secondly targeted were those Caribbean ports where Spanish wealth and power were concentrated. Finally, some consideration was made to supplanting Spanish monopoly of the region with a permanent English base.

With over a score of ships and about 2300 men, including Martin Frobisher as vice-admiral, the fleet struck first at Bayona and Vigo, on the coast of Spain itself, and again at Santiago in the Portuguese Cape Verdes. These preliminary forays yielded provisions but nothing more, except that the Santiago encounter exposed Drake's men to a deadly fever which killed two or three hundred before they even reached the Indies. The corsair fleet made landfall at Dominica, refreshed there and at St. Kitts, then proceeded toward the first Caribbean target--Santo Domingo. Hispaniola's capital, before its dominance was usurped by ports established on the Main, had certainly seen more splendid days as the premier seat of Spanish power and commerce in the New World. The city itself was taken without much struggle on New Year's Day, 1586; and though the town was vigorously ransacked, the pirates found none of the expected abundance which had driven them to the task. In fact, the town's former opulence seemed only to mock its violators, who encountered considerable difficulty burning down once-prosperous houses built soundly of stone. Eventually, the corsairs' excesses induced the unfortunate inhabitants to raise 25,000 ducats²³ to ransom their city, and the invaders sailed away with only a fraction of the wealth they had imagined would be theirs (Andrews 1967, 96-104; Burns 1954, 158-59).

Drake's fleet struck next at Cartagena, already Spain's booming entrepôt for the Indies trade. Though only marginally fortified, Cartagena's geographic site in itself provided a formidable first defense. The seaport could be reached only circuitously from the Caribbean, first through the shallow entrance

(from De Pointis 1698, reprinted in Haring 1910)

of the Bocagrande into Cartagena Bay, thence into a lagoonal recess to the south of the city, and finally through a narrow opening to the inner harbor (blocked by a metal chain and guarded by a fort--see Map 4). Drake's force anchored near the Bocagrande and marched against the town along the adjoining mile-long spit, known as the Caleta (or Bocagrande Peninsula), which forms the northern enclosure of Cartagena Bay. Though the townspeople had been warned of Drake's imminent arrival for weeks, their preparations proved ineffectual and Cartagena succumbed to the pirates after only a minor battle. Drake's men at once set in to plunder, occupy, and exact ransom for the town to the tune of 107,000 ducats--a much better return than the Santo Domingo affair but still far short of their expectations. Drake and his officers considered holding onto the town as a permanent base, but sickness and low morale took gradual toll of their men until they were compelled to quit the Main and any grand design Drake may have fostered for pushing on to Panamá. On the way out of the Caribbean, Drake's fleet lingered awhile off the coast of Cuba, evidently weighing the chances of taking Havana or intercepting the treasure convoy, but exiting in the end along the Florida coast. The corsairs dealt a parting blow to the Spaniards by razing their fort and settlement at St. Augustín, then returned home in July of 1586 (Andrews 1967, 104-8; McDowell 1989, 502-3).

Domestic concerns in Europe, not the least of which included the Spanish Armada of 1588, kept Drake out of the New World for nearly a decade. In his absence, however, other corsairs emulated his tactics on both coasts of the Americas. In 1586, George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland,²⁴ embarked on the first of many

voyages against the Spaniards in the Caribbean (Gosse 1924, 95). That same year Thomas Cavendish captained the *Desire* and two other ships through the Strait of Magellan to harass shipping and settlements on the Pacific side. Like Drake before him, Cavendish pillaged the coast of Peru, captured a pilot for the Manila route, and raided Guatulco as he cruised northward. Despite Drake's demonstration of force along these shores in the previous decade, virtually the entire Pacific trade from Panamá northward--including the main port of Acapulco and the returning China ships--remained utterly vulnerable. Cavendish could hit repeatedly along the coast of New Spain and afterwards lay in wait to snare a Manila galleon. Off Cape San Lucas, the tip of the Baja California Peninsula, he sighted his luckless prey--the *Santa Ana*--seaworn from a four months' voyage and overloaded with passengers and rich cargoes. The Spanish crew fought bravely enough, but their vessel was no match for the Englishman's firepower. The portion of booty in gold coin alone was worth 122,000 pesos. Victorious and satiated, the *Desire* proceeded westward across the Pacific, returning finally to Plymouth in September of 1588 (Gerhard 1960, 81-94). The pirate Cavendish became the world's third circumnavigator and, like Drake before him, was honored with knighthood. Of his American adventure the corsair recounted, "I made great spoils. I burnt and sunk nineteen ships, both great and small. All the villages and towns that I landed at, I burnt and spoiled" (in Mitchell 1976, 48).

By 1589, corsair attacks in the West Indies were so numerous that Spanish authorities ordered the homebound treasure convoy to remain in Havana. In 1592, Christopher Newport, better known for

his later efforts to settle Virginia, led a privateer squadron through the Caribbean, sacking towns in Hispaniola and raiding Puerto Caballos and Trujillo on the Honduran coast (Burns 1954, 160-61; Andrews 1959, 219-23). The poorly defended expanse of beach from Trujillo to Puerto Caballos only beckoned to pirates²⁵, and Captain William Parker, in league with a French corsair named Jeremias Raymond, launched a series of raids there beginning in 1594 (Andrews 1959, 308-25).

The year 1595 heralded the return of Francis Drake to American waters, this time in league with his old comrade and mentor, John Hawkins. The expedition began impressively enough, with twenty-seven ships and about 2500 men. The golden prize of Panamá, having thus far escaped the rapacious clutches of the Elizabethans, no doubt invoked their assemblage, but last-minute intelligence of a crippled galleon at San Juan de Puerto Rico--with treasure worth two-and-a-half million ducats--was too tempting to ignore. The English warships sailed in August; unknowingly, five enemy frigates under Pedro Tello, dispatched by the Spanish Crown to rescue the stranded treasure, practically followed in their wake. En route, as might have been expected, the corsairs' joint command soon degenerated into a bitter quarrel. Drake, against all Hawkins' protestations, insisted on a preliminary raid against Las Palmas in the Canaries. The attack was repulsed and nothing gained from the encounter, save the opportunity to restock with fresh water. Precious time was lost, however, and the Spanish frigates were closing the gap.

By October's end, the English fleet anchored off Guadeloupe, where one of the smaller vessels was sighted and captured by Pedro Tello. Thus apprised of the pirate fleet and its objective, the Spanish commander proceeded to forewarn San Juan and take part in its defense. Though the city's fortifications stood in a sorry state, the few days of preparation afforded by Tello's arrival proved sufficient to repulse the English. Hawkins, who had fallen gravely ill en route, died at the outset of the siege. Drake and his officers, determining they could not take the city without unacceptable losses, withdrew for the Main, where raids against Río de la Hacha and Santa Marta yielded a few pearls but little more. Cartagena, by now on full alert, was bypassed in favor of the isthmian treasure ports. Nombre de Dios, already in decline as its functions transferred to Porto Bello, fell to the invaders at once. From there Drake sent upwards of six hundred men under the command of Sir Thomas Baskerville to march overland against Panamá. The Spaniards, however, having set up ambushes along the most strategic passes, fired heavily upon the pirates, eventually forcing them back. Drake's expedition was finished. He had lost the element of surprise at every step.

In a last-ditch effort for plunder, the corsairs sailed westward for Nicaragua, possibly with the intent of taking Granada. Adverse weather conspired to deter the fleet, however, while raging dysentery immobilized the crews. Drake, broken and delirious, succumbed himself to the disease on January 28, 1596. Within a league of Porto Bello, off the coast of his first great victory against the Spaniards, the arch-pirate's body was placed in a lead

coffin and committed to the sea. Baskerville assumed command, captured and burned Porto Bello, then sailed with the remnants of the fleet for England (Andrews 1967, 158-79; Burns 1954, 161-62; Corbett 1925, 198-209).

The demise of Drake and Hawkins rid Spanish America of its two most celebrated plunderers, but the age of the sea dogs was not yet done. Sir Walter Raleigh, whose name recalls more the colonizer than the corsair, had sailed in 1595 for Guiana²⁶ in search of the fabled city of El Dorado. Though he never found it, he and his later associates²⁷ did manage to loot Spanish settlements on the island of Trinidad, at San Tomé on the Río Orinoco, at Cumaná, Cartagena, Río de la Hacha, and Santa Marta along the Main. In 1596, a small fleet under Sir Anthony Shirley touched first at Dominica and proceeded to sack Santa Marta. In February of the next year, Shirley's fleet targeted the utterly defenseless island of Jamaica, where Villa de la Vega (or Santiago de la Vega--later Spanish Town) fell to the pirate torch. Its impoverished citizens reluctantly parted with beeves and cassava to rid themselves of the intruders. Shirley now met up with William Parker, and in consort they stood for the latter's favorite hunting grounds in the Gulf of Honduras. After an unsuccessful stab at Trujillo, the rovers managed to take Puerto Caballos before parting company. Shirley returned to England, while Parker captured Campeche along with valuable logwood and silver (Burns 1954, 169-71; Wright 1922). That unfortunate town was doomed to a century of relentless pillaging (Von Winning 1950).

The last of the great Elizabethan privateering voyages, most notable because it succeeded--at least briefly--where even Drake had failed, was George Clifford's capture of San Juan de Puerto Rico in 1598. This was the Earl of Cumberland's final expedition to the West Indies, with twenty ships outfitted at his own expense. Little booty was to be found in San Juan, however, and the English determination to hold the port as a permanent base soon withered in the grip of yellow fever (Haring 1910, 41; Burns 1954, 171). Nevertheless, Cumberland's stroke meant that by the end of the sixteenth century corsairs had plundered all of the major ports of the Caribbean (not to mention numerous minor ones): Havana, Nombre de Dios, Santo Domingo, Cartagena, Porto Bello, and now San Juan.

Philip II died that same year, and France made peace with Spain by the Treaty of Vervins. The death of Philip's lifelong Tudor adversary, former patroness of Drake and the English seadogs, followed in 1603. A year later England, too, was at peace with Spain, though enmity persisted 'beyond the line' (Burns 1954, 171-72). The turn of the century thus in some ways marked the close of a distinctive corsair era, but it also capped the foundation for continued piracy in Spanish America under a new guise. By now, the region's corridors of piracy were well defined.

The basic pattern of pillage initiated by Drake, Oxenham, Cavendish, and their contemporaries left a "monotonous record of raids on Spanish towns," from the Caribbean to the Pacific, "to be continued by the buccaneers in the next century" (Burns 1954, 172). The utility of small craft and overland assaults, so characteristic of later buccaneering, had also been successfully demonstrated by

the corsairs. The piratical campaigns of the sixteenth-century, though never successful in smashing Spanish hegemony in the New World, left little doubt as to its vulnerability. The names of Drake and Cavendish, even a century after those adventurers' deaths, resounded a symbolic jingle in the minds of buccaneer and Spaniard alike.²⁸ The old sea dogs bequeathed a tradition of spirit, tactics, and experience to a new generation of pirates who would surpass even their spectacular example.

A New Breed

Calendrical progression from one century to the next did not signal a halt to corsair voyages or tactics--these were to continue. It was not until 1628 that Piet Heyn, admiral for the Dutch West India Company, finally realized what corsairs before him had only aspired to do: capture an entire Spanish treasure fleet. Assembling in the Netherlands with more than thirty ships, some of nearly a thousand tons burden, the fleet boasted 679 bronze and iron cannon, 2300 seamen, and 1000 soldiers. It was a formidable strike force, but Heyn was taking no chances. Two years before he had watched impotently as the combined treasure fleets floated grandly past him in the Caribbean. In the admiral's estimation, the Mexican *flota* remained most vulnerable of the two convoys, and he considered three strategies for overpowering it. He could attack the fleet as it lay in port on either side of its Gulf-Caribbean transit; but Vera Cruz was protected by the fortress at San Juan de Ulúa, while Havana lay snug under the guns of the Morro Castle.

The safest option, though perhaps not the surest, was to engage the *flota* en route as it passed Cape San Antonio. Heyn started across the Atlantic in May, taking every precaution to conceal his movements. In July he sighted St. Vincent and, after stopping briefly there and at Blanquilla for water and fresh goat meat, stood directly for the Isle of Pines. Round Cape San Antonio, Heyn positioned his fleet near the western approach to the Straits of Florida, between Dry Tortugas and the avenue to Havana. Despite Heyn's clandestine efforts, the Spaniards on the Main, at least, had learned of his presence in the Caribbean and delayed departure of the Tierra Firme galleons from Cartagena. Moreover, as the Dutch fleet endeavored to maintain position against the prevailing winds and current, it was driven deeper into the Straits until Heyn's ships came within sight of the Morro itself. The commander of the Mexican *flota*, however, General Juan de Benavides, had already left Vera Cruz late in July and remained completely oblivious to the Dutch presence. Over twenty ships began the passage, four of them galleons loaded with treasure and the rest crammed full with passengers, luggage, provisions, logwood, hides, and various other cargoes. The enemy fleets crossed during the night.

On the morning of September 8, 1628, Benavides realized to his horror that he had overshot his destination and sailed into the clutches of the enemy. Unable to reach safe harbor in Havana without engaging the Dutch, he made instead for the closer Bay of Matanzas, about fifty miles east of the capital. Heyn, anticipating his opponent's quandary, dispatched a fast squadron to cut the Spaniards off at Matanzas while he continued to press with the main

fleet from the Havana side. With no recourse, Benavides entered the bay in hope of unloading or sinking at least some of the galleons, while behind him the Dutch stoppered the bottle from either side. Panic and confusion quickly unravelled every effort at Spanish resistance, and Heyn's victory was soon complete. The Dutch made off with the four treasure galleons plus twelve smaller prizes, and Piet Heyn returned to Holland a national hero, with 11,500,000 guilders worth of booty in tow (Goslinga 1971, 180-95).

Such European-based attacks continued well into the century of the buccaneers, culminating perhaps with the three-year marathon cruise of Captain William Jackson, a transitional pirate who combined the spirit and tactics of Drake with the Caribbean-based resources of the buccaneers. Cruising in a small barque, Jackson had gained privateering experience in the West Indies as early as 1638. The following year he attacked, among other places, the Río San Juan (or Desaguadero), a vulnerable bottleneck for maritime commerce between the Caribbean and the Nicaraguan interior. Such raiding yielded rich cargoes of money, plate, indigo, and sugar; but even these ill-gotten proceeds were not enough to satisfy his creditors in England. Hence Jackson, now in command of three small warships, sailed again from England in 1642 to wreak even greater havoc in the Spanish Caribbean. His first attempts at the pearl fisheries of Margarita and at small towns along the Main proved fruitless. Everywhere he met resistance, and when his men did manage to take a place they found it stripped of all valuables.

On into the Gulf of Venezuela, Jackson's men descended on the prosperous town of Maracaibo,²⁹ again only to encounter stiff

resistance and, afterwards, houses emptied of all but perhaps some sugar, hides, tobacco, and sack wine. A month's occupation, coupled with threats and burning, finally induced the beleaguered Spaniards to deliver 10,000 pieces of eight³⁰ and thereby salvage their town from total destruction. Spring found the marauders, disillusioned and hungry, heading for remote Cape Tiburon at the southwestern tip of Hispaniola to nurse their misfortunes and gather victuals. There, perhaps inspired by Anthony Shirley's previous success, they determined to try their luck at Jamaica. Standing westward, first for the tiny islet of Navassa³¹ (where they overtook a small frigate laden with ebony wood), they reached what is now Kingston Harbour by late March of 1643. Jamaica's only settlement of any consequence, Santiago de la Vega remained poorly defended forty-six years after Shirley's raid. After a short skirmish with the militia, Jackson's pirates took possession of the town, at that time consisting of four to five hundred houses, five or six chapels, and a Franciscan monastery. Its residents were already gone; forewarned at least a week in advance of their city's fate, they had fled to the hills with their dearest possessions. Jackson negotiated the town's ransom while twenty-three of his own men, tempted by the island's pleasant and fertile surroundings, defected during the night to the Spanish camps.³² The displaced Spaniards eventually despaired of their exile, for evidently they met the invaders' demands for 200 cattle, 10,000 pounds of cassava, and 17,000 pieces of eight³³ (Harlow, ed. [Jackson] 1923, 1-19).

Persistent in his search for greater booty, Jackson removed to the Gulf of Honduras where it was rumored that a large quantity of

plate was due for shipment. The English squadron, which now included various Spanish prizes, dropped anchor at Roatán, the largest of the Bay Islands (22). Pirates were no strangers to these parts. French corsairs, who had menaced the Bay since 1536, were followed by the English, beginning in 1564, and eventually by the Dutch. Because it was so poorly fortified, yet harbored the Spaniards' only ports between Porto Bello and Campeche, the Honduran coast provided an easy and sometimes lucrative hunting ground.³⁴ The Bay Islands were especially attractive to pirates. Small and remote enough to elicit little more than occasional interference from the Spaniards on the mainland, these islands offered ingressing pirates a superb *oarenage* where water and, thanks to the native population, fresh victuals and small craft were readily obtainable (Davidson 1974, 40-42). When Jackson reached the Bay Islands in June of 1643, he fully expected a warm reception from the resident Indians, proven allies of the Dutch and English pirates. At both Roatán and neighboring Guanaja, however, Jackson's men found the Indians' "Plantacions & Houses desolate, & therefore, Imagined, as the truth afterwards appeared, that ye Spaniards had given them a visit, & had carried them off from hence" (Harlow, ed. [Jackson] 1923, 22).³⁵ After a week's refreshment in the Bay Islands, the pirates struck at Trujillo,³⁶ hoping to intercept the rumored plate shipment. No such treasure was to be found, only "divers Chistes of Sugar, Tobacco, Sarsa Parilla, & some small quantitie of plate" (24). Trujillo, to be sure, had been pillaged so mercilessly by French, English, and Dutch pirates that by the time Jackson's men came, they "found it in a very poor & ruinous condition; so that ye

Riches which were formerly brought from Guatimall, Corriago, & other wealthy Townes in ye Continent, to this place, are since transported by caravans to Portes of more strength & Security" (25).

Cruising southward along the Miskito Shore, where they provisioned with maize and turtle meat, the little fleet made rendezvous at the isle of Escudo de Veraguas³⁷ off the north coast of Panama. When a brief pillaging expedition to the interior produced nothing of value, they stood again for the Main. Tolú, the 'Garden of Cartagena', fell quickly to the marauders after only a show of resistance:

In this Towne we founde an unexpected supply of all our wants, Good store of Plate, Jewells, Lynen, Sack, Sugar, Corne, Plantaines, Goates, Hoggs, Poultry, & ye like good Pillage, & necessary provisions, with which wee recreated and refreshed ourselves, 4 days space; & in that time sent out divers parties to force ye Enemy to come to some composition, for their Towne; but, all in Vaine, for they were either soe stubborne, or timmorous, that they would not, or durst not, looke upon us, in regard whereof wee fired their houses, being very stately buildings, about 300 in number; but exempted 3 faire Churches from the fury of these flames; & soe departed hence, leaving them to coudle their Crosses in dust & ashes (29-30).

And so, on to Jamaica and then to Cuba for maintenance and repairs, the pirate fleet was careening in the string of cays off Cuba's southern flank by February's end in 1644. Here, for want of pitch and tar, they caulked their hulls with the fat of seals before setting westward for Cape Catoche. Small prizes and towns in the Gulf of Mexico proved easy pickings for cochineal, logwood, hides, tallow, and even a bit of plate. Jackson, apparently convinced that he had gained as much on the account as he was likely to, resolved at last "to put a period to this Voyage, which most men had long expected, & now earnestly wished for" (30-34).

William Jackson has been described as one who rekindled "the spirit of the old Elizabethan adventurers" (Burns 1954, 227), "emulated the exploits of Sir Francois Drake" (Haring 1910, 50), and "By so doing...largely contributed to the decision of Cromwell to continue the Elizabethan tradition of reprisals against Spain; and to embark upon an enterprise, the object of which was the substitution for a Catholic and Spanish empire, of one that was English and Protestant" (Harlow, ed. 1923, v). His actions, as we have seen, lend ample support for such comparisons, but a fundamental geographic difference distinguished Jackson's voyages from those of his corsair-predecessors. By the end of the sixteenth century, though not entirely for lack of trying, not one of Spain's European rivals had succeeded in establishing a permanent base west of the Tordesillas Line.³⁸ By the time Jackson arrived on the scene, that situation had changed completely. Certain of the Lesser Antilles provided initial toe holds for Spain's European contenders. With so huge a realm to colonize and defend, the Spaniards were hard put to safeguard numerous tiny islands which offered little or no mineral wealth.

England was the first to sieze such crumbs from the colonial table by occupying St. Christopher in 1623 and Barbados not long after. Together, these islands provided Jackson about a thousand fresh recruits for his Caribbean campaign of 1642-45. It was an advantage Drake had never enjoyed. True, like his predecessor, Jackson staged his celebrated assault from Plymouth, whither he ultimately returned; but many of his recruits stayed in the Caribbean, reclaiming their homes on St. Christopher and Barbados.

Moreover, Jackson himself had based his earlier voyages from Providence Island (Santa Catalina), colonized by the Puritans in 1629 and the resort of Dutch and English pirates even before that (Parsons 1964, 21). The island had been recovered by the Spaniards before Jackson's famous voyage (he cruised, in fact, under a commission from the Providence Company to redress its losses there); but for over a decade it had provided a key privateering base for expeditions to the coast of Central America, enabling the English to develop a critical alliance with the Indians there. Jackson, while skirting the Miskito Shore from the Bay Islands to the Río San Juan, could rely heavily upon these native allies for food, refuge, and information--yet another crucial development since Drake's time. It was mostly the appearance of such bases and pirate outposts by the early seventeenth century--rather than any historically convenient centurial division--which distinguished the piracies of the buccaneers from those of the corsairs. For this reason the depredations of Jackson and his Puritan backers, though clearly demonstrative of a revived or continued Elizabethan tradition against Catholicism and Spanish monopoly in the New World (Newton 1933, 172; Harlow, ed. 1923, xiv), fall arguably within the historical realm of the buccaneers. It was moreover, partly Jackson's successful demonstration at Jamaica which eventually encouraged the establishment there, under Cromwell's directive, of the most important English buccaneering stronghold in Spanish America.

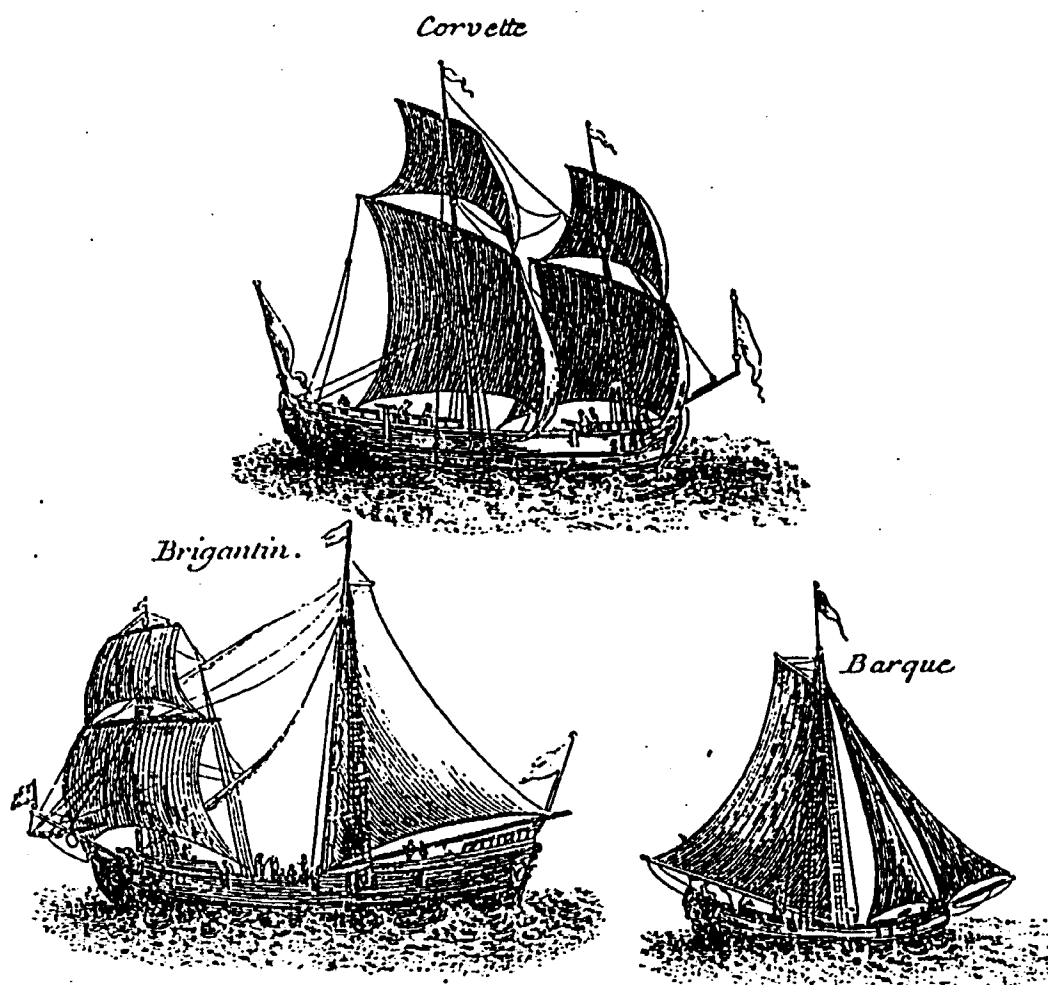
Buccaneers

In addition to the establishment of pirate bases in the very heart of Spain's American empire, the seventeenth century brought other changes which heralded a new era of piracy. One of these was a new sense of identity which was emerging among the pirates themselves. Drake had managed to maintain a strong sense of obedience and discipline among his men, doubtlessly resorting at times to extreme measures. By the end of his era, authoritarian hold over the pirates was significantly crippled:

During the long piratical orgy of the Spanish War, seasoned mariners were in a strong position. Knowing that they were in steep demand, they became less and less inclined to put up with harsh discipline. Richard Hawkins [1560-1622, son of Sir John] described them as 'like to a stiff-necked horse which, taking the bridle between his teeth, forceth his rider to do what him list.' By the 1590s it was normal practice to consult the crew in any important matter, and they often compelled a captain to change the course and objectives of a voyage (Mitchell 1976, 50).

This democratic trend only intensified among the buccaneers, whose captains they typically elected from the ranks but were prepared to desert or depose upon the slightest altercation. Much of the buccaneers' individualism can be directly attributed to the pioneer spirit which necessarily accompanied total abandonment to a new geographic milieu:

American buccaneers...unlike the European pirates who preferred to return to Europe at the end of a raid, remained in place to further terrorize the Spanish colonists. They differed from the European pirates in another fundamental way. These men were separating themselves from their own societies for longer and longer periods. Unlike the men who went home after a raid they remained behind in small communities and lived off the land. As time went by they would be increasingly out of the control of their home governments and more and more independent (Ritchie 1986b, 5).



**Figure 3: Examples of Buccaneer Prize Vessels--
Corvette, Barque, and Brigantine**

(from Haring 1910)



Figure 4: Henry Morgan--Port Royal's Pirate Laureate

(Originally printed in the 1684 edition of Exquemelin)

The buccaneers etched deeper but also extended the scope of depredations already established by the corsairs. John Davis and others ventured up the Río San Juan deep into the Nicaraguan interior to plunder Granada for the first time in 1665, and continued to pillage as far as León and Realejo on the Pacific (Gerhard 1960, 137 and 138n; Williams 1976, 51). Two years later, L'Olonnais of Tortuga repeated Jackson's success at Maracaibo, marauding even further to Gibraltar as well. Henry Morgan, who headed buccaneer sorties from Jamaica's Port Royal, captured Puerto Principe³⁹ and again Porto Bello, then finally consummated the lustful intent of generations by sacking Panama in 1671. Morgan emerged as the undisputed leader of the buccaneers, the model pirate-turned-knight of his own century much as Drake had been before. Clarence Haring calculated that from the English takeover of Jamaica in 1655 to the end of Morgan's active piracies in 1671, a space of just sixteen years, the buccaneers "sacked eighteen cities, four towns and more than thirty-five villages--Cumana once, Cumanagote twice, Maracaibo and Gibraltar twice, Río de la Hacha five times, Santa Marta three times, Tolu eight times, Porto Bello once, Chagre twice, Panama once, Santa Catalina twice, Granada in Nicaragua twice, Campeache three times, St. Jago de Cuba once, and other towns and villages in Cuba and Hispaniola for thirty leagues inland innumerable times" (1910, 267).

In 1680, after yet another sacking of Porto Bello, John Cox led a second band of buccaneers across Panama. Among the ranks were Bartholomew Sharp, Basil Ringrose, William Dampier, William Dick, and Lionel Wafer--all of whom left journals to posterity.⁴⁰ These

men carried French commissions from Petit-Goâve in western Hispaniola, by then the most important haven remaining to buccaneers, and crossed the Isthmus with the aid of Darien's Cuna Indians. Following basically the same strategy pioneered by Oxenham and Morgan, the pirates crept into the Pacific with crudely hewn canoes,⁴¹ but these they soon exchanged for larger, more seaworthy prizes in the Bay of Panama. In those ships, which by a series of desertions fell ultimately to Bartholomew Sharp's command, many of the buccaneers continued roving in the South Sea for a space of two years. Using the uninhabited islands of Juan Fernández, as well as the *islas* Plata, Gorgona, and Coiba as bases of refuge, Sharp's men struck all along the Pacific coast of South and Central America from Coquimbo to the Gulf of Nicoya. The various journals concerning this expedition⁴² underscore how only minimal booty and sustained hardships attended most of the buccaneers' raids. Their landed assaults--against Pueblo Nuevo (opposite the Isla de Coiba), Paíta, Hilo, Arica, Huasco, La Serena, and Coquimbo--all ended disastrously, yielding nothing but occasional provisions. By contrast, some of the prizes obtained at sea proved rather valuable, particularly one taken between Cape San Francisco and Cape Passao.

This unfortunate Spanish bottom, bound out of Callao for Panamá, was the *Santo Rosario*, "a merchant ship of great bulk, as most of your Spanish vessels are, and very deeply laden"--with a most welcome cargo indeed (Ringrose 1987, 433-34). Aside from its goodly store of fruit, oil, and several hundred jars of wine and brandy (MS Cox 1682, NMM Gos/4, f. 52), the *Rosario* filled each man's pocket with 94 pieces of eight in ready money and carried, at

least to young Basil Ringrose's mind, "the finest woman I have seen in the South Sea"⁴³ (MS Ringrose [1682], BL Sl.3820, f. 106; Ringrose 1987, 433-34). Yet another unexpected bonus was the ship's "great book full of sea-charts and maps, containing a very accurate and exact description of all the ports, soundings, creeks, rivers, capes, and coasts belonging to the South Sea, and all the navigations usually performed by the Spaniards in that ocean" (Dick 1987, 278). The *Rosario* with her passengers, after being relieved by Sharp's men of anything which bespoke value, was allowed to sail away less all but her foremast. Actually she was still laden with more treasure than the buccaneers could have imagined, and William Dick later recounted with sarcastic bitterness what might qualify as the most ironic episode in the history of piracy:

In this ship [the *Rosario*], besides the lading above-mentioned, we found also almost 700 pigs of plate, but we took them to be some other metal, especially tin: and under this mistake they were slighted by us all, especially the Captian and seamen, who by no persuasions used by some few, who were for having them rummaged, could not be induced to take them into our ship, as we did most of the other things. Thus we left them on board the *Rosario*...being very glad we had got such good belly-timber out of her and thinking little what quantity of rich metal we left behind. It should seem this plate was not yet thoroughly refined and fitted for to coin; and this was the occasion that deceived us all. One only pig of plate, out of the whole number of almost 700, we took into our ship, thinking to make bullets of it; and to this effect, or what else our seamen pleased, the greatest part of it was melted or squandered away. Afterwards, when we arrived at Antigua, we gave the remaining part of it, which was yet about one-third thereof, unto a Bristol man, who knew presently what it was (though he dissembled with us), brought it to England, and sold it there for seventy-five-pound sterling, as he confessed himself afterwards to some of our men. Thus we parted with the richest booty we had gotten in the whole voyage, through our own ignorance and laziness (1987, 277-78).⁴⁴

For Bartholomew Sharp it was not silver, but the captured Spanish charts which later proved most valuable, as only these saved him from the pirate's noose awaiting him in England. Sharp and his buccaneers returned to the Caribbean, at any rate, in a remarkable feat of navigation which brought them round Cape Horn to Antigua; but perhaps we had better leave them in the middle of the South Atlantio, late in December of 1682, with an entry from John Cox's log which proves that even slighted, bloodthirsty buccaneers could retain the yuletide spirit:

25th Sunday. 14 Le: East in Lat: by observⁿ d/21:m/1 wynd at
E faire w^r

When we tooke y^e 2 Barkes at Nicoya we had a Little Sucking pigg in one of them, w^{ch} we keep on board for our Christmast dayes dinner, w^{ch} was now growne to be a very good Hogg: So we killed it for Dinner, but our men thinking it not enough for dinner, they bought a Spanill Dogg of our Quarter master, for 40 p^s 8/8 & killed him So y^e Hogg and the Dogg made us a feast for Christmas daye, & wth some wyne we had left, made our Selves merry, for we had eat nothing y^t had Blood in it Sence our departure from y^e Duke of Yorkes Island-----East: 730 Leagus
(MS 1682, BL Sl.49, f.61).

By 1683, Vera Cruz remained the only major Gulf-Caribbean treasure port yet to be thoroughly pillaged;⁴⁵ but that year saw it flamboyantly ransacked in concert by Dutch, French, and English buccaneers under Laurens de Graff, Nicholas Van Horn,⁴⁶ and the Sieur de Grammont. Sailing out of Petit-Goâve with a French commission (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 175-76), the pirate fleet consisted of at least seven vessels ranging from eight to fifty guns, as well as some lighter craft. The buccaneers themselves numbered a thousand men or more, mostly Dutch (176; ([Lynch] 1684,

115-16). A concise but detailed account of the raid was penned shortly afterwards by Sir Thomas Lynch, the zealously anti-piratical governor of Jamaica who lost no time apprising the authorities in England of the buccaneers' latest excesses. The most salient bits of his report follow:

On the 8. day of May, they came on the Coast of la Vera Cruz, and lay by; there the Men that were to land, were put on Board Yanchy and Christian,⁴⁷ and then stood off.

On the 9. these two Ships stood in, and in the Night the Spaniards in the Castle and on Shoar, made fire to Pilot them in, supposing them to be two of their Flota;⁴⁸ so they came to an Anchor, and landed before one a Clock in the Morning, about two Miles from the Town, seven hundred and four men.

Van Horn had the Main Body, as General, & was to attack the Plaça or chief part of the Town, where they expected the Court of Guard, but found only four Men: Laurence commanded the *Forlorn*,⁴⁹ and with it attempted the two Forts, the one of twelve, the other of eight Guns, both close Forts, but they found them open, and the Centinel asleep; so with the loss of one man killed by the Spaniards, and three by a mistake of the French, by break of day they had made themselves Masters of the Forts and Town; and had they, as Laurence advised, sent at the same time but two Canoes and fifty Men, they had without a doubt surprized the Castle, which stands upon a Rock in the Sea,⁵⁰ three quarters of a Mile from the Town, and has in it seventy guns mounted.

But the Pyrates thinking it more safe and profitable to plunder the Town: set Guards at the Streets ends, and sent Parties to break open the Houses, where they found every body as quiet, as in their Graves, and for three days they continued breaking of Houses, plundering them, and dragging the miserable Inhabitants to the Cathedral, and though at this time they got abundance of Jewels, Plate, etc. and about three hundred and fifty Bags of Cochenelle⁵¹...yet were they not satisfied, but put the considerable people to ransome, and threatned to burn the Cathedral and Prisoners in it, which were five thousand and seven hundred, if they did not immediately discover all they had; so that the fourth day they got more than the other three; and had seventy thousand pieces of Eight for the Governour Don Luis de Cordova's Ransome, which Spurre found hid amongst Grass in a Stable ([Lynch] 1684, 115-19; cf. MS Lynch 1683, NMM Gos/6).

The incoming Spanish *flota*, including twelve formidable vessels, remained safely at bay while all this looting and terrorism continued unchecked. The fleet's presence nevertheless had enough of a sobering effect on the ruffians to force them offshore to a cay known, by virtue of its ruined Indian temple, as Los Sacrificios. There they resumed their extortion and division of spoils. Each share, of which there were about 1200, came to eight hundred pieces-of-eight worth of plate and ready money. Human booty, in the form of about a thousand Negro and mulatto slaves, added significantly to the value of the take. Van Horn, as co-admiral, demanded eighty shares for himself and the use of his two ships, much to the outrage of de Graff. The two leaders came to blows, but soon disengaged, with Van Horn suffering no more than a cut on the wrist. It was bad enough to attract gangrene, however, and the doomed buccaneer was heaved overboard after a fortnight. Grammont as his lieutenant assumed command of the Dutchman's ship and returned to Petit-Goâve, while Laurens de Graff and the remainder of the fleet made first for Jamaica, and then for Guantanamo on the south side of Cuba ([Lynch] 1684, 118-20; cf. MS Lynch 1683, NMM Gos/6).

The following years witnessed an unplanned reunion of buccaneers in the South Sea. Dampier and Wafer, commanded by former comrades John Cook and Edward Davis, together with newcomer Ambrose Cowley (yet another pirate-chronioler)--all in the *Batobelor's Delight*--entered the Pacific round Cape Horn in March of 1684. Meanwhile John Eaton in the *Nicholas*, briefly in consort with Ringrose and Charles Swan (formerly under Henry Morgan) in the *Cygnet*, had just navigated the Strait of Magellan. In the Pacific,

the two vessels first mentioned joined forces; again remote Juan Fernández and now the Galápagos Islands served as bases of refuge and attack. Six months' marauding as far north as the Gulf of Fonseca produced nothing of value, so Eaton in the *Nicholas*, now joined by Cowley⁵² as ship's master, sailed off across the Pacific in search of Asian plunder. Swan in the *Cygnets* had actually embarked on this cruise to the South Sea in the hope of establishing regular English trade there, but the Spaniards, he soon discovered, would have none of it. It was quite by chance that in August of 1684 he encountered a party of buccaneers led by Peter Harris.⁵³ The new arrivals, having crossed the Isthmus with a successful raid against Santa Maria, now wished to go cruising in the South Sea. Swan's crew, aroused by the jingle of gold in the others' pockets, at this point coerced their captain into 'going on the account' after all. Making rendezvous with the *Bachelor's Delight* at the Isla de la Plata in October, a now formidable little pirate squadron determined to set the trap for the Lima treasure fleet on its approach to Panamá. Yet another corps of buccaneers crossed the Isthmus in February of 1685, bringing an additional 280 French and English pirates under François Grognet. These were followed in March by a contingent of 180 Englishmen led by Captain Townley, and again in April by an additional 264 French buccaneers (the latter included Raveneau de Lussan, who later published a journal of his piracies). Truly, as Dampier observed, "the Isthmus of *Darien* was now become a common Road for Privateers to pass between the *North* and *South-Seas* at their Pleasure" (1927, 140). Ten vessels and nearly a thousand men now lay ready to greet the Lima fleet as it

hove into the Bay of Panama at the end of May. Despite all their preparations, the buccaneers soon found themselves outmaneuvered by the Spanish fleet, which managed during the night to gain their windward. Now the fourteen Spanish vessels made full use of their firepower, peppering their would-be captors with several direct hits. The retreating buccaneers, severely battered and berating each other's incompetence, could only glower as the victorious Lima fleet and its supposed treasure withdrew to the safety of Panamá's harbor (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 85-113; Gerhard 1960, 154-61).

The survivors retired to the Isla de Coiba to recuperate, provision, and fashion new canoes from the island's tall trees. No longer too pleased with each other's company, most of the French buccaneers stayed with Grognet while the English majority sailed north for a raid against Realejo and León. The former (known by the buccaneers as Rio Lexa) offered little more than a small estuarine anchorage from which one could journey overland to such towns as Viejo and León, or on to Granada. Smoking fumes from El Viejo,⁵⁴ tallest in the chain of volcanoes looming ominously behind the little port, made Realejo an easy harbor to sight; and five small islands in its sheltered waters facilitated careening (Dampier 1927, 150-52; Raveneau de Lussan 1930, 100). León, about twenty miles to the southeast, presented a more prosperous provincial center which the ex-priest Thomas Gage had described, nearly forty years previously, as an American paradise. Now William Dampier paused in the course of his pillaging to note its advantageous geographic site and fine residences (though lack of a treasury):

The Houses of *Leon* are not high built, but strong and large, with Gardens about them. The Walls are Stone, and the Covering of Pan-tile: There are three Churches and a Cathedral... Indeed if we consider the Advantage of its Situation, we may find it surpassing most Places for Health and Pleasure in *America*, for the Country is of a sandy Soil, which soon drinks up all the Rain that falls... It is incompassed with Savannahs; so that they have the benefit of the Breezes coming from any quarter; all which makes it a very healthy Place. It is a place of no great Trade, and therefore not rich in Money. Their Wealth lies in their Pastures, and Cattle, and Plantations of Sugar (1927, 154).

The English buccaneers proceeded to burn both towns when neither plunder nor ransom rewarded their efforts, and then returned to their boats. Shortly afterwards, Grognet's Frenchmen arrived for another round of pillage, only to encounter smoldering devastation and a growing muster of Spanish opposition (155; Raveneau de Lussan 1930, 100-102).

Again the marauding bands went separate ways. Davis and Harris headed south, while Swan (now joined by Dampier) and Townley ventured up to the Mexican coast to reconnoiter the situation at Acapulco. Despite its distinction as the the only major entrepôt for Spanish treasure shipments on the Pacific coast of New Spain, primarily as the American terminus of the Manila trade and moreover (with the closure of Guatulco) as an outlet for Peruvian commerce, Acapulco alone, of the six Middle American treasure ports,⁵⁵ managed to evade capture by pirates. Part of the city's good fortune owed, no doubt, to its remote and relatively inaccessible position, far from the hub of Caribbean conflict. More significant, however, was the fact that for most of the year Acapulco offered nothing of sufficient value to warrant attack by pirates. True, with the arrival of the Manila galleons, usually between November and January, the port sprang to life with all the accoutrements of the

lucrative Philippine trade,⁵⁶ at least until the departure of the China ships by early spring; but for the remainder of the year:

Acapulco was deserted except for a small permanent population of Negroes, mulattoes, and Chinese (there were no Indians). It was a dirty, unattractive village, a hodgepodge of wood and mud huts with thatched roofs, hot and swarming with vermin and troublesome gnats, and a perfect breeding place for all sorts of tropical disease (Gerhard 1960, 39-41).

Drake and Cavendish, we recall, made no effort to molest Acapulco, knowing full well that no treasure awaited there when the Manila galleon was not in port. The Spaniards, in fact, made no effort to fortify the harbor until 1614, when news arrived that a Dutch pirate, Joris van Speilbergen, was bound in that direction. Their preparations evidently proved sufficient to deter the Dutch from landing, and afterwards construction began in earnest on the five-pointed Castillo de San Diego. The main fortress was equipped with up to fifty cannon, and a smaller redoubt later secured the harbor from the other side (42-45). Now, on a November night in 1685, Townley's buccaneers stealthily entered Acapulco's harbor in canoes to ascertain the strength of a Lima merchantman:

because they would not be heard, they hal'd in their Oars, and paddled as softly as if they had been seeking Manatee. They paddled up close to the Castle; then struck over to the Town, and found the Ship riding between the Breast-work and the Fort, within about a hundred Yards of each. When they had well viewed her, and considered the Danger of the Design, they thought it not possible to accomplish it; therefore they paddled softly back again, till they were out of command of the Forts, and then they went to Land, and fell in among a company of *Spanish* Soldiers...who immediately fired at them, but did them no damage, only made them retire farther from the Shore. They... afterwards... returned aboard again, being tired, hungry and sorry for their Disappointment (Dampier 1927, 172).

Swan's crew had suffered enough disappointment in these waters, so the *Cygnets* sailed north along the Mexican coast with the intent to cross the Pacific. Ringrose was killed in a bloody skirmish not far from Mazatlán, and Swan died on Mindanao soon after reaching the Philippines. Dampier would return to England in 1691 to complete the first of three voyages round the world. Davis continued roving the South Sea for over a year, striking again from Juan Fernández and the Galápagos to pillage the coast of Peru, and lending his frigate to protect Grognet's forces in the Gulf of Guayaquil. Eventually he departed round Cape Horn in the *Batchelor's Delight* (with Lionel Wafer still on board) and may first have discovered Easter Island ('Davis Land') en route (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 114-27; Joyce ed. [Wafer] 1934, 125n-126n).

Townley's buccaneers and the Frenchmen under Grognet (including Raveneau de Lussan) crossed paths again in March of 1686 and decided to renew their alliance for another assault on Nicaragua. This time their target was Granada. Its position at the head of Lake Nicaragua made Granada an important trade center; for here lay the inland terminus of a 220-mile-long waterway connecting western Nicaragua to the Caribbean Sea. From the city's productive hinterland came indigo, cochineal, tobacco, dyewood, maize, poultry, and naval stores. By the 1590s, its fortuitous site had made Granada far more prosperous than León, the provincial capital, while its relative distance from the sea had spared it from corsairs. The merchant ships which threaded Granada's riverine lifeline, however, particularly where the Río San Juan emptied into the Caribbean, had

long been subject to intense piracy. By the latter sixteenth century, corsairs were venturing upriver as far as Lake Nicaragua.

In 1602, when such piratical incursions appeared to threaten Granada itself, the Spanish Crown authorized the establishment of a garrison at San Carlos, where the river issued from the east side of the lake, and another fort called Santa Cruz to command the El Diablo rapids. Pirates nevertheless persisted in hovering about the river's mouth, especially during the 1630s, when buccaneers maintained a base at nearby Providence Island (Williams 1976, 48-51; Gage 1928, 371; MacLeod 1984, 164). It was not until 1665, however, that a band of buccaneers ascended the San Juan in canoes and took the citizens of Granada completely by surprise.⁵⁷ Consequently, a second wooden fort soon defended San Carlos, but by 1670 its rotten timbers and sparse militia could not withstand a new influx of buccaneers who sacked Granada for a second time. Finally, in 1675, though Granada had already declined in population and importance, the moated Castillo de la Inmaculada Concepción, built soundly of brick and stone over the strategic Santa Cruz site, effectively secured the river from pirates (Williams 1976, 51-53; cf. Floyd 1967, 32-35). Unfortunately for the citizens of Granada, when Townley and Grognet came to loot their city in April of 1686, they approached not via the San Juan River, but overland from the South Sea.

At Realejo the buccaneer bands once more parted company. Townley's men (now joined by Raveneau de Lussan) sailed south, first for Coiba, and then into the Bay of Panama, where they infested Taboga and the Pearl Islands while harassing local traffic. Townley

himself died in a bloody encounter with two Spanish ships sent out to engage him, but his crew succeeded in capturing both vessels. Here ensued one of the grislier pirate customs. Finding their demands for ransom money and the release of five captured buccaneers unmet, Townley's desperados sent twenty Spanish heads to the president of Panama to assure him of their earnest intent. Their missing comrades and ten thousand pieces of eight soon materialized. Now the command fell to a French captain named le Picard, and the pirates eventually removed from the Pearl Islands to Coiba. After further molesting the battered coasts of Central America, they finally rejoined Grognet in the Gulf of Nicoya (Gerhard 1960, 179-85).

The marauders could expect nothing more from the chain of smoking villages which now stretched from Amapala to Panama, so Guayaquil became their next agreed-upon target. Here was a grand town (on the coast of modern Ecuador) which too long had enjoyed a respite from buccaneers' flames. Guayaquil had been razed by Dutch pirates in 1624 (Gerhard 1960, 127-28), but so far none of the South Sea raiders of the 1680s had dared anything more than a feint or reconnaissance of its strength. Sharp and his gang certainly had their sights set on it, and among them Basil Ringrose had noted the reasons for their intrigue:

[T]he city of Guayaquil, being a very rich place, [is] the *embarcadero*, or sea-port, to the great city of Quito. To this place likewise many of the merchants of Lima do usually send the money they design for Old Spain in barks, and by that means save the custom that otherwise they would pay to the King by carrying it on board the fleet. Hither comes much gold from Quito, and very good and strong broadcloth, together with images for the use of the churches, and several other things of considerable value. But more

especially coco-nut,⁵⁸ whereof chocolate is made, which is supposed here to be the best in the whole universe. The town of Guayaquil consists of about 150 great houses, and twice as many little ones (1987, 357).

Ringrose, we have seen, never lived to plunder the town he described, but by February of 1687, Grognet and le Picard were well under way with over three hundred French and English buccaneers hell-bent on smashing open its gates (Gerhard 1960, 185). Among them was the French pirate Raveneau de Lussan, who recorded the events (1930, 204-28). In April they entered the Gulf of Guayaquil and secreted themselves on La Puna, an insular shield which provided a calm road for larger ships at the mouth of the Guayas River. Here they managed to evade the island's elaborate network of lookouts while obtaining prisoners to apprise them of the city's layout and defenses. During the night they drifted as far upriver as the incoming tide would carry them, purposely avoiding the splash of telltale oars. Despite these precautions, their nocturnal landing was betrayed by a light from one of their own sentries who could not resist a pipeful. Their attack at dawn thereupon met with prolonged and vigorous resistance, but eventually they surmounted the city's defenses and took possession of Guayaquil. The French Catholics among them proceeded to the cathedral to sing *Te Deum* while the rest continued rounding up prisoners and whatever valuables had not been spirited off by the fleeing citizenry. Silver was found plentifully enough, and one of the more noteworthy objects recovered was a sixty-eight pound gilded eagle encrusted with rubies and emeralds--a holy ornament from some tabernacle. After a few days of rape⁵⁹ and ransacking, the buccaneers selected five hundred

influential hostages, including the governor, and returned to Puna to await the negotiated ransom and provisions. Guayaquil they left partially burnt and strewn with over nine hundred corpses. Grognet himself died from wounds sustained in the battle. The Spanish authorities stalled for time, releasing only the promised victuals and several thousand pieces of eight while amassing for a counter attack. On Puna, a month of carousing kept the pirates occupied, but they soon tired of the Spaniards' delays and "were forced to apply...the customary rigorous measures"--i.e. having Spanish prisoners "throw dice to see which men would lose their heads" (214). The Spaniards eventually released eighty sacks of flour and gold worth forty-two thousand pieces of eight. Satisfied with this amount, the buccaneers released all but the most important prisoners and quit the island of Puna. Only with considerable difficulty did they escape two Spanish squadrons which had been dispatched during the negotiations to bottle them up in the Gulf of Guayaquil. By June the pirates were caulking their boats on the Isla de la Plata; afterwards they concentrated on dividing great sums of spoil.

Still further coastal raiding, most notably against Tehuantepec on the shores of New Spain, finally brought le Picard and his 280 remaining buccaneers to Amapala Bay in the Gulf of Fonseca. From there, in January of 1688, they resolved to march overland and return to Caribbean shores via the Segovia River. After two months' crossing, most of them indeed reached Cape Gracias a Dios (Gerhard 1960, 185-87; Raveneau de Lussan 1930). Thus ended⁶⁰ a long series of brutal, poorly coordinated, and, for the

majority of its participants, unprofitable buccaneer enterprises on the Pacific coasts of Spanish America.

As the French, English, and Dutch governments strove to develop and legitimize their colonial footings in the New World, the buccaneers who had so long advanced their national interests were increasingly outliving their usefulness. Efforts were made to woo them to more conventional colonial pursuits, such as planting, but many of the coastal fraternity preferred to remain on the account. After Morgan's retirement from the seas in 1671, the English authorities prosecuted pirates more vigorously, though the French governors of Tortuga and Saint-Domingue encouraged them for several years longer. Still one last call to arms would muster the buccaneers on a grand scale before the Brotherhood of the Coast fully disintegrated. It began as a joint operation with the regular French navy, and the objective was Cartagena. The fleets made rendezvous at Petit-Goâve in March of 1697. There the buccaneer-governor of French Hispaniola, Jean-Baptiste du Casse, had gathered 1100 local recruits, including 650 *flibustiers* whom he commanded himself. Led by Jean-Bernard Desjeans, Baron de Pointis, the troops from France numbered 4000, half sailors and half landmen. Together, the fleets boasted nine royal frigates and seven buccaneer ships, along with several smaller vessels⁶¹ (Haring 1910, 262-67). It was the largest invasion force yet seen in the Indies, but it faced a formidable task. Cartagena's labyrinthic entrance via a double lagoon, as we have already noted, provided a natural first defense (see Map 4). Since Drake's success in 1586, moreover, the

city had become not only the richest, but also the most extensively (though not effectively) fortified Spanish stronghold in the Indies:

The mouth of the harbour, called Boca Chica, was defended by a fort with 4 bastions and 33 guns; but the guns were badly mounted on flimsy carriages of cedar, and were manned by only 15 soldiers. Inside the harbour was another fort called Santa Cruz, well built with 4 bastions and a moat, but provided with only a few iron guns and without a garrison. Two other forts formed part of the exterior works of the town, but they had neither garrison nor guns. The city itself was surrounded by solid walls of stone, with 12 bastions and 84 brass cannon, to man which there was a company of 40 soldiers. Such was the war footing on which the Spanish Government maintained the 'Key of the Indies' (264n).

The fleet reached Cartagena on April 13 and, as a landing on the rugged north shore proved quite impossible, proceeded to enter Cartagena Bay through the Bocachica.⁶² De Pointis had no affinity whatsoever for the buccaneers or their consorts, and repeatedly demonstrated prejudice for preserving his own troops. Thus it was a company of eighty Negroes⁶³ who first landed to assault the fort at Bocachica, which a day later was captured with the blood of buccaneers. Again, it was the buccaneers who the following day captured the high ground a mile to the east of the city. Upon this hill stood the church Nuestra Señora de la Poupá, commanding all landward approaches to the city. De Pointis pursued this strategy to forestall the inhabitants from absconding to the interior with their treasure (Burney 1891, 360-62). Early in May, after over a fortnight of spirited resistance, Cartagena capitulated and opened its gates to plundering. The value of the booty was staggering, perhaps as much as twenty million sterling, though the buccaneers and their governor-captain received only 40,000 crowns to divide amongst themselves--a sum far short of their expected due. De

Pointis thereupon withdrew from the city in a hasty departure for France, while the buccaneers, who would not be so easily cheated for their efforts, re-entered the ravaged city for a second round of looting (Haring 1910, 265-66). It was indeed a grim ordeal for the city which "was attacked more often and more disasterously than any other important place in Spanish America" (Burns 1954, 114n).

With the French reduction of Cartagena came also the Peace of Ryswick, whereby Spain finally acknowledged the rights of her last piratical contender to colonize in the West Indies. Thus the year 1697, with the close of the century so near at hand, has been recognized by leading historians of piracy as the end of the buccaneering era (Haring 1910, 266; Gosse 1946, 174). Of course, as with the corsairs, a few piracies marked by the distinctive buccaneer flair sputtered well into the next century, particularly those commissioned during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). One such expedition in 1702, chronicled afterwards by Nathaniel Davis, targeted Tolú and the Caña gold mines of Darien (Davis in Joyce, ed. 1934). Davis' companions, including Captain Christian of Vera Cruz fame, sailed in July aboard four armed sloops with commissions from Jamaica. Forcing their way into Tolú they discovered, as so often was the case, that most of the city's inhabitants had already fled with their valuables, leaving "not...so much as a Silver Candlestick in their Churches, which was very mortifying" (155). There was nothing to do but spike the guns, burn the place, and move on. Cruising southwest they fell in with some French pirates who habitually haunted these coasts, then anchored at Golden Island in the San Blas archipelago off Darien.

In this chain the Isle of Pines, La Sound's Key, and Golden Island had long served as buccaneer rendezvous with fiercely anti-Spanish Indians for raids to the interior and the Pacific. This alliance had been well established even before Coxon and Sharp's arrival in 1680; of the present gang, Captain Christian had lived a long time with the natives of Darien. It was the rainy season when the buccaneers and their Cuna companions landed in the Gulf of Urabá, marching off across swollen rivers and swamps toward the forested mountains of the interior. Their objective was Caña, a gold-mining settlement near the very town of Santa Maria which Peter Harris' band had sacked on the way to the South Sea. Again, by the time the buccaneers secured the village, the Spaniards had already made off with most of whatever treasure lay in store. Not to be deprived of their due, the pirates tortured their Spanish hosts to discover the location of any hidden caches, while forcing twenty-four captured Negroes to dig more gold. Fifty pounds of freshly mined gold was thus procured before the buccaneers fired the town and headed back to their boats (152-65).⁶⁴

The unquenchable William Dampier returned to Spanish American waters three times, the last in 1708 to begin his third circumnavigation at the age of fifty-six. On this occasion he served as South Sea pilot for Captain Woodes Rogers, who in the course of his three-year privateering voyage round the world with the *Duke* and *Duchess* managed to sack Guayaquil and capture a Manila galleon worth over £800,000 (Rogers 1928; Lloyd 1966, 123-49; Williams 1961, 158). Other notable privateering voyages included those of Shelvocke and Clipperton in 1718, but for the most part

these were isolated ventures launched from Europe, not buccaneering forays as defined here (see Kemp and Lloyd 1960; Shelvocke 1928). Here we have glimpsed only the highlights of the buccaneers' movements, but in the following chapter we will take closer notice of their operations and peculiar lifestyle as these evolved from their base on Tortuga.

Freebooters

The eighteenth-century successors of the buccaneers, though inflicting only a brief reign of terror on the high seas, swept piracy in Spanish America to a dramatic finish and branded in the public mind the swashbuckling image of pirates which persists to this day. These were undisputed freebooters, *hostis humani generis*,⁶⁵ the likes of Blackbeard and Bartholomew Roberts, whose household notoriety owed to excesses of single-minded cruelty and greed. True outlaws working the fringe of a closing maritime frontier, these pirates owed allegiance to none but themselves and preyed upon the shipping of any nation, whether Spanish, English, French or Dutch. Consequently, unlike their buccaneer forebears, they enjoyed no cloak of legitimacy from any government (though many a colonial governor colluded in trafficking their spoils) and were therefore doomed to swift eradication. Many of them, it is true, had begun their piratical careers as privateersmen during the War of the Spanish Succession. In the Lesser Antilles, French *flibustiers* had marauded under commissions throughout the war, at the height of

which Martinique alone served as base to twelve or thirteen hundred (Haring 1910, 271-72). With the Treaty of Utrecht, however, and the establishment of a new balance of power among European nations by 1714, their sea roving continued unabated. It proved, as the Reverend Cotton Mather had observed, that "the privateering stroke so easily degenerates into the piratical" (Williams 1961, 149). So began the reckless flourish known as the 'Golden Age of Piracy', a decade or so of rank hoodlumism set loose on the open sea under the japing countenance of the Jolly Roger.⁶⁶

The post-war freebooters inherited from the buccaneers a certain sense of fraternity bred from common contempt for the social order and a democratic approach to regulating life aboard ship; but they differed from them fundamentally, aside from the question of commissions or even tacit state patronage, in several respects. To begin with, though two or more of their vessels might temporarily voyage in consort, the freebooters essentially operated as lone wolves. Neither did they enjoy the clout and protection once afforded by the great buccaneer fleets, nor could they operate in league with regular naval forces. With insufficient man- or firepower to launch coastal assaults, these pirates returned to pure sea robbery, typically involving ship-to-ship combat replete with grappling irons, grenades, stink bombs, and all-or-nothing boarding assaults. Every hand needed to be an experienced mariner--no room for the likes of intrepid but inexperienced landsmen who had swelled the ranks of the buccaneers. Moreover, while ready in a pinch to live off the land, the freebooters were neither hunters nor planters, woodcutters nor colonists ashore; their ties to the land

remained minimal. Aside from a brief occupation of New Providence in the Bahamas, the Anglo-American rovers, at least, could claim no pirate stronghold in which to muster, retire, refit, and conveniently dispose of their booty. Like all pirates, this new breed concentrated their efforts on the region's major shipping lanes, especially near choke points. Because they were relatively footloose and could pursue merchantmen of any nation, their movements were less predictable than those of their piratical predecessors, and they were difficult to catch. By the same token, they faced more enemies in pursuit; and their individual successes, though sometimes spectacular, were generally short lived and of little import to the greater geopolitical dynamics of the region.

Spatially, the freebooting Golden Age culminated an explosion of piracy from its Caribbean cradle to a full-fledged global system. Earlier, the corsairs and buccaneers had extended their depredations from the Greater Antillean heart of Spanish America, westward and southward to the Gulf of Mexico and along the Spanish Main. As these shores came under the effective colonial control of the four great European powers, freebooters sought refuge in the smaller, peripheral islands of the circum-Caribbean realm. From Trinidad to the Bahamas they darted from one remote cove to the next in swift sloops and other elusive shallow-draft vessels, intercepting as many merchants as possible in between, and hoping to evade cumbersome-but-deadly men-of-war. Yet Caribbean waters, though vital to the commerce of many nations, provided neither the richest nor the easiest pickings; and by the turn of the century, various factors had converged to lure the attention of pirates elsewhere. The

growing intolerance of colonial governments, the vigilance of regular navies and *guardacostas*, the diminishment of Spain's American gold and silver shipments, and the partial paralysis of maritime commerce effected by the pirates themselves--all conspired to extend the rovers' range abroad. As early as 1696, the Surveyor-General of the Customs in New England, Edward Randolph, advised the English Crown of emerging patterns of raid and refuge in a memorandum reminiscent of Mainwaring's earlier discourse on piracy:

About 20 Years ago, King Charles the Second was pleased to send me to New England to Enquire into their Trade and Commerce. I observed that they fitted out Vessels of 60 or 70 Tuns a peece, very well mand whom they calld privateers, & Sent them without Comission to the Spanish West Indies, where they comitted all Acts of violence...& brought home great quantities of Silver in Coins & Bullion... I have heard of no Pyracies done these Severall Years in those places for the Pyrates have found out, a more profitable & less hazardous Voyage to the Red Sea, where they take from the Moors all they have, without Resistance, & bring it to Some one of the Plantations on the Continent of America or Islands adjacent where they are received & harbourd and from whence allso they fit out their Vessells to the Same Place (printed in Gosse 1946, 320).

Randolph went on to list the chief resorts of pirates in the Americas, namely the Bahama Islands, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Boston, and further recommended that piracy could be suppressed should "his Majesty be pleased to send a first Rate ffrigott under the Comand of a sober person, well acquainted with the Bahama Islands & other places, where the Pyrates usually resort, with a Comission to Grant pardons to all such, who will give Security to settle quietly in the Plantations" (321). His advice was finally heeded twenty-two years later.

Piratical connections between the North American colonies and the Caribbean realm were nothing new. The Carolinas and the Bahamas

shared the same proprietors, New England's ties to the region dated back to the Puritans' earliest efforts to colonize Providence Island and Tortuga, and New York (formerly New Amsterdam) had long welcomed Dutch buccaneers to its port (Haring 1910, 271; Jameson 1923, 9-14). By the date of Randolph's report, long after Tortuga and Port Royal, Jamaica had been closed to buccaneers, North American colonies from the Carolinas to New England served as havens for pirates and markets for their goods. At this time infamous sea rovers, the likes of Thomas Tew, Henry Every (or Avery) and William Kidd, engaged a far-flung, lively freebooting circuit known as the 'Pirate Round' (Mitchell 1976, 101-22). Trans-hemispheric diffusion of the sweet trade supplied financiers in New York and New England with lucrative spoils from the vulnerable Arab-Indian traffic connecting Jiddah, Mooha, and Bombay. Intermediate cruises along the African coast, where the Guinea slave trade provided a constant lure and remote Madagascar offered perfect asylum, then back to the old hunting grounds of the West Indies, served to punctuate the Pirate Round. Historically and geographically, the advent of the Round marked a reversal of the east-to-west corsair forays which had brought piracy to the New World almost two centuries before. Kidd prowled about the Leeward Islands, while Tew and Every resorted to New Providence in the Bahamas; but the real fortunes of these pirates, fleeting though they were, owed to plunder from the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Even that most raffish brood which heralded piracy's Golden Age (roughly 1716 to 1726)⁶⁷ performed most of its mischief either in the Old World or along the Atlantic coast of North America. Thus the focus of piracy removed from Spanish

America, and the most celebrated exploits of the day find no place within the scope of our study. However, some of this period's most notorious sea bandits did launch their careers from Spanish America's waters, and quite a few of them ended their days on its soil--or rather dangling a few feet above it.

Most of our knowledge of these picaroons comes from Captain Charles Johnson's *General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates*, first published in 1724 and accepted by modern authorities as the work of none other than Daniel Defoe.⁶⁸ Though doubtlessly embellished to suit the romantic tastes of the reading public, this account appears factual enough as far as the pirates' movements are concerned and is widely accepted by historians as an honest portrayal of their deeds. In it, we are informed by 'Captain Johnson' that

the Pirates generally shift their roving according to the season of the year. In the summer they cruise mostly along the coast of the Continent of [North] America, but the winters there being a little too cold for them, they follow the Sun and go towards the Islands at the approach of cold weather. Every man who has used the West India trade knows this to be true; therefore, since we are so well acquainted with all their motions, I cannot see why our men-of-war, under a proper regulation may not go to the Southward, instead of lying up all the winter useless (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 20).

The number of freebooters scouring the seas at this time was indeed formidable. Historian Marcus Rediker has estimated that among the Anglo-American pirates alone as many as 2400 cruised between 1716 and 1718 (1987, 256). In Spanish American waters, the isle of New Providence in the Bahamas emerged as their principal base, serving perhaps upwards of a thousand picaroons.⁶⁹ Here a Captain Henry Jennings, having in 1716 slipped into the piratical

mold while relieving Spanish salvage workers of 350,000 pieces of eight reclaimed from wrecks off Florida, established a school of piracy whose founding practitioners included Charles Vane and 'Calico Jack' Rackham, Anne Bonney and Mary Read, Edward England, Howel Davis, Thomas Anstis, John Auger, Charles Bellamy, Thomas Burgess, Oliver La Bouche, Benjamin Hornigold, and the latter's lieutenant, Edward Teach (or Thatch)—better known as 'Blackbeard' (Albury 1975, 59-65; Rediker 1987, 268; Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 150, 200-232).

In July of 1716, Governor Spotswood of Virginia warned: "A nest of pirates are endeavoring to establish themselves in New Providence, and by the additions they expect and will probably receive, of loosely disordered people from the Bay of Campeachy, Jamaica and other parts, may prove dangerous to the British commerce, if not timely suppressed" (in Williams 1961, 150). King George had even better cause for vigorous response if we are to believe, as one confidant to James II's dethroned widow claimed, that the pirates of New Providence "did with one heart and voice proclaim James III for their King" (Craton 1962, 100). In effect, what the Hanoverian monarch finally authorized was the very measure suggested by Edward Randolph over two decades earlier. In 1717 the King commanded Governor Bennett of Bermuda to grant pardons to the freebooters of New Providence should they willingly retire from the business and remove to his colony. Only a handful of the outlaws, their headmaster Jennings notably among them, took advantage of the initial offer (Oldmixon 1966; Craton 1962, 100). The following year, however, the "sober person" envisioned by Randolph arrived in

the body of Woodes Rogers, himself a celebrated (but penniless) ex-privateer, now entrusted with the governership of the Bahamas and a royal directive to clean out the islands' piratical nest once and for all.

The newly appointed governor, backed by five warships and a company of footsoldiers, repeated the King's overture of clemency when he took possession of New Providence in the summer of 1718. This time the pirates' response proved more encouraging. Six captains and hundreds of crewmen submitted to the terms of the pardon, among them Burgess and Hornigold, who later even aided Rogers' efforts in apprehending and prosecuting those still at large. That December the public hanging of John Auger and seven of his crew in the shadow of their former stronghold provided a symbolic precursor to the end of piracy in the region; several hundred freebooters remained abroad, or had escaped Rogers' blockade, or soon reverted to their old way of life after having accepted the King's pardon. Nevertheless, the arrival of Woodes Rogers deprived the pirates of their only remaining bastion in the Spanish American realm and presaged an end to their era in the New World (Craton 1962, 101-9; Williams 1961, 158-60; Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 200-232).

Of those freebooters still menacing the Caribbean after the suppression of New Providence, none earned greater notoriety than Blackbeard, christened Edward Teach or Thatch. Of his earlier exploits we know very little, except that he was a Bristol man serving aboard Jamaican privateers during Queen Anne's War, as the War of the Spanish Succession was generally called in America (Lee

1974, 3-8). In this capacity "he had often distinguished himself for his uncommon boldness and personal courage, [but] he was never raised to any command till he went a-pirating" (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 38). In these respects Teach was perhaps representative of pirate commanders in his day, most of whom hailed from the lowest classes of bustling seaports, found little opportunity for advancement as ordinary seamen in the orthodox naval or mercantile regime, and consequently maintained a "hatred of subservience and the failure to achieve success" (Burg 1977, 44-47). What distinguished Blackbeard from his cohorts was a great sense of macabre theatrics which ensured loyalty from his men and struck fear into his victims:

Captain Teach...assumed the cognomen of Black-beard, from that large quantity of hair which, like a frightful meteor, covered his whole face and frightened America more than any comet that has appeared there a long time.

This beard was black, which he suffered to grow of an extravagant length; as to breadth, it came up to his eyes. He was accustomed to twist it with ribbons, in small tails, after the manner of our Ramillies wigs, and turn them about his ears. In time of action he wore a sling over his shoulders, with three brace of pistols, hanging in holsters, like bandoliers; and stuck lighted matches under his hat, which, appearing on each side of his face, his eyes naturally looking fierce and wild, made him altogether such a figure that imagination cannot form an idea of a Fury from Hell to look more frightful (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 51-52).

Blackbeard's satanic appearance supposedly betrayed an equally demonic character, that of a despotic brigand chief who reputedly shot his own men just to keep them in line (51), or otherwise bullied them into submission and respect:

For being one day at sea, and a little flushed with drink, *Come, says he, let us make a hell of our own, and try how long we can bear it.* Accordingly he, with two or three others, went down into the hold, and closing up all the hatches, filled several pots full of brimstone and other

combustible matter, and set it on fire, and so continued until they were almost suffocated, when some of the men cried out for air. At length, he opened the hatches, not a little pleased that he held out the longest (52).

Whether or not such stories constituted mere folklore or the fanciful constructions of Daniel Defoe, Blackbeard must indeed have earned some measure of his fearsome reputation, and it certainly facilitated his career:

The Blackbeard legend ensured that no prize offered resistance, and this was presumably accepted by his crew as offsetting his lethally freakish whims... Official statements by the officers of merchantmen held up and rifled by Blackbeard show that he did not physically ill-treat prisoners, however much he may have blustered and blasphemed (Mitchell 1976, 92).

Edward Teach apparently began his piratical career with Jennings and Hornigold when they raided the Spanish-plate salvage operation off Florida in 1716 (Woodbury 1951, 84). The following year he sailed from New Providence under Hornigold and took a Havana sloop laden with nothing but flour. Shortly afterwards a Bermudian prize furnished a few gallons of wine, while a Madeira ship bound to South Carolina yielded a much richer cargo. After careening on the Virginia coast, the pirate duo returned to the West Indies and captured a French Guineaman headed for Martinique. At this point Teach assumed command of the valuable French prize, mounted it with forty guns, and renamed it the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. He then broke consort with Hornigold, who returned to New Providence to make his peace with the new governor. Off St. Vincent, Captain Teach plundered a sizeable British merchantman and afterwards emerged unscathed from a tangle with a Barbadian man-of-war. Standing next for the Central American coast, he met up with the unfortunate Major Stede Bonnet, a Barbados estate holder who supposedly embraced

piracy to escape his nagging wife. Though feigning to befriend the landlubbing gentleman, Teach effectively relieved him of his captaincy and commandeered his vessel.

At Turneffe, an island group off the coast of modern Belize, the pirates replenished with fresh water and captured a Jamaican sloop. After a week's resort in these islands, Blackbeard and his entourage made for the Gulf of Honduras, where they successfully plundered a Boston merchantman and four smaller vessels. Calling next at Trujillo, Grand Cayman, and Havana, Blackbeard finally steered from Spanish American waters for the Carolinas and Virginia. After wreaking much havoc upon these coasts, he was apprehended and beheaded at Ooracoke Inlet by Lieutenant Maynard late in November of 1718 (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 38-50, 62). So perhaps this year, marking both the arrival of Woodes Rogers and the much publicized death of Blackbeard, provides the most fitting historical endpoint for our study. Other famous pirates would continue roving in the Caribbean and elsewhere for some years to come, but the likes of Charles Vane, Jack Rackham, and perhaps the most successful of the bunch--Bartholomew Roberts--soon met with similar dissolution. At any rate, pirates by this time had by and large removed from Spanish America, so let us cast a keener geographical eye toward various places where they left their mark.



Figure 5: Edward Teach--alias 'Blackbeard'

(Eighteenth-century engraving
reprinted in Mitchell 1976)

Pirate Haunts and Strongholds

In the course of two centuries few were the islands and coasts of Spanish America where pirates failed to call. Certain places, however, the names of which appear over and over again in the chronicles of piracy, furnished corsairs, buccaneers, and freebooters strategic territorial footholds during the long battle waged 'beyond the line'. In our geographical resumé of the region's piracy, pictorially represented by Maps 2 and 3, we can group such places into three categories. The first comprised small, usually remote islands and archipelagos which served as refuges teeming with fruits, fish, turtle, game, wood, and water. Some of these islands became favorite spots for careening, making rendezvous, dividing the spoils, or marooning prisoners and dissenters. The second, reminiscent of the "pirate coasts" described by Semple and Whittlesey, consisted of swampy, economically limited, serpentine shorelines which created perfect hideouts along the Caribbean and Gulf coasts from the Río San Juan to the Bay of Campeche. Here pirates retreated not only for safety and provisions in the course of their raiding, but also between voyages to cut logwood for the lucrative dye trade. The third kind of place, representing the pinnacle of pirate success, was the fortified port, typically securing a small island stronghold. Relatively few pirate bastions emerged, and these flourished as such only briefly before being subsumed by more legitimate colonial enterprises of the French, English, and Dutch. All piratical haunts owed their locations not to serendipity, but to the same positional criteria which appear to

have shaped piracy everywhere: site and situation with respect to maritime physiography, natural resources, and the lines of commerce.

Island Refuges and Rendezvous

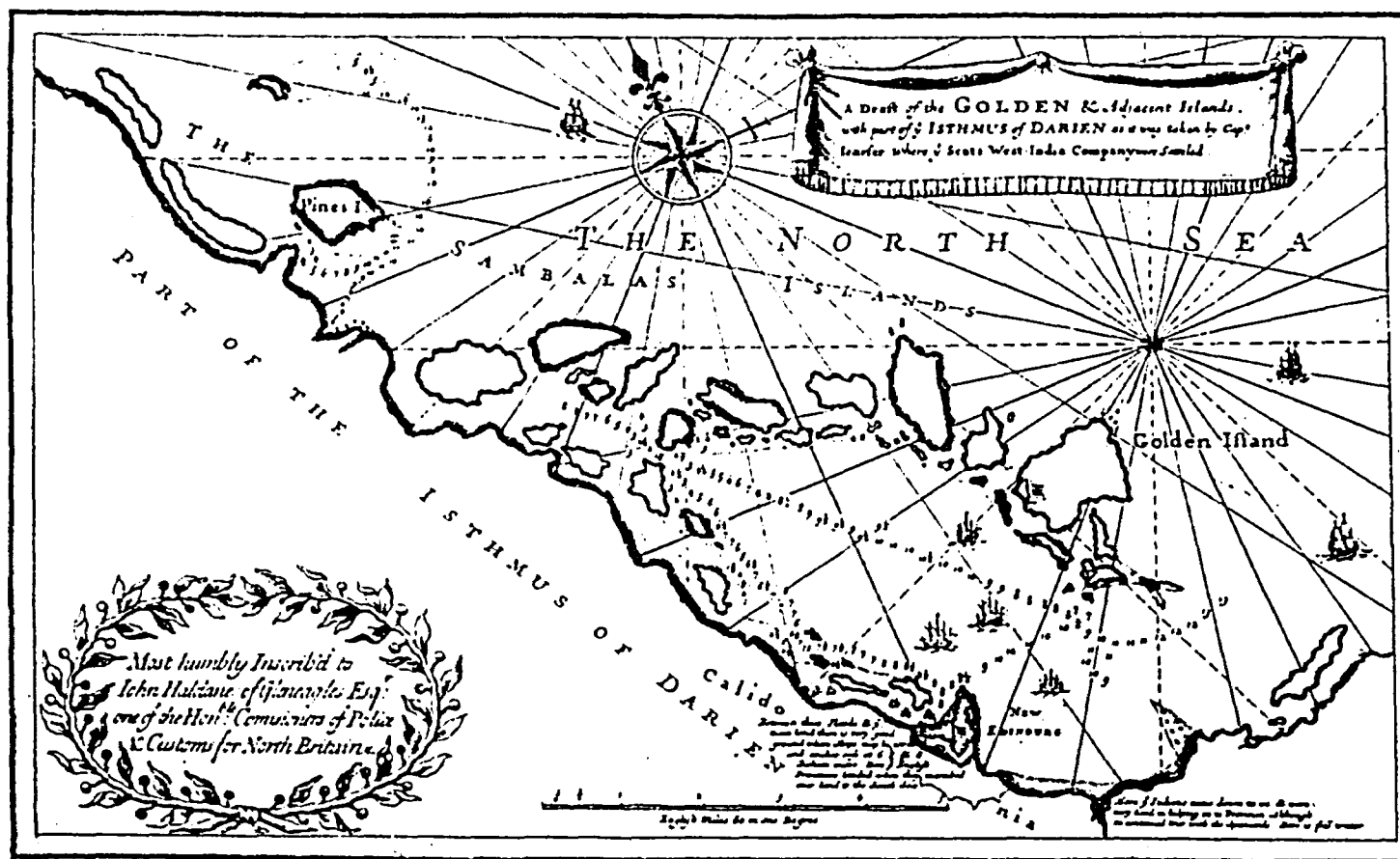
The Antilles. Small islands indeed figured conspicuously in the development of the region's piracy. Too rugged, remote, or otherwise limited in resources to invite permanent colonization or garrisons on the part of the Spaniards, many nevertheless afforded refreshment enough and safe cover to itinerant raiders. Those which lay within easy striking distance of lucrative trade routes and settlements proved particularly useful to pirates. In all of Spanish America, perhaps no archipelago occupied more strategic a position than the Bahama Islands, posing as they did a veritable gauntlet of piratical snares ready to snap up the treasure-laden *galeones* and *flota* on their homeward stretch from Havana:

...to avoid the bars of the Carolinas, some convoys turned eastward at Great Isaac Rock north of Bimini and sailed directly to the deep waters of the Atlantic between the islands of Eleuthera and Abaco [i.e. through the Northeast Providence Channel]. They travelled in convoy for safety and all lights were doused by night to escape attention of privateers who swarmed the northern Bahamas. Needless to say the channels are littered with wrecks of ships which never made the passage to the open Atlantic (Barratt 1972, 52-55).

French corsairs infested these islands from the outset, and later buccaneers made themselves equally at home. It is perhaps ironic that the Bahamian island so long attributed as Columbus's initial landfall, and thus as Spain's first territorial claim in the New World, should also bear the name of Watling--a British buccaneer

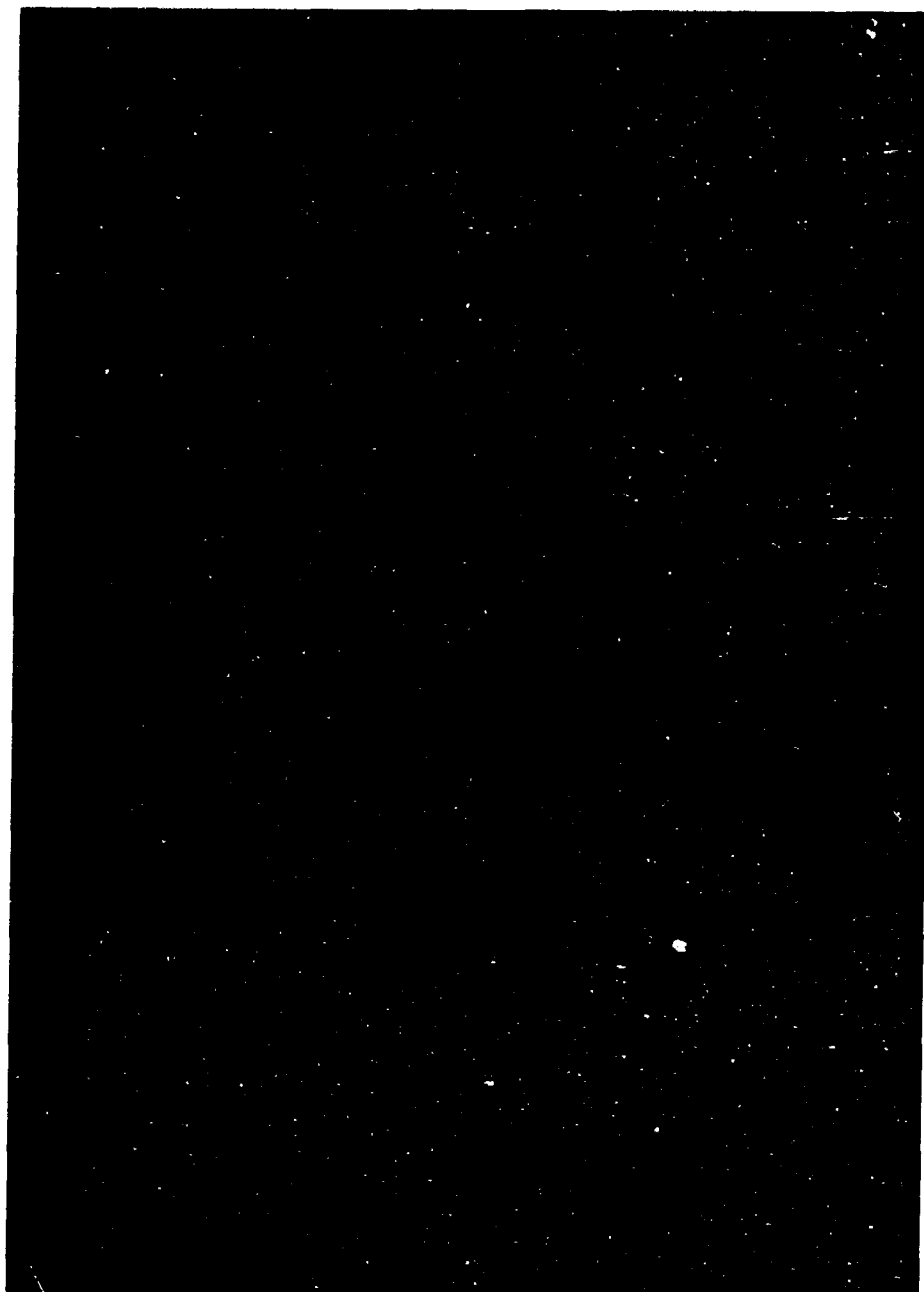
(Lynam 1948, 244)⁷⁰. In addition to convenient placement, the largely untenanted maze formed by the Bahamas suited the clandestine needs of pirates extremely well. The archipelago includes, in addition to thousands of desolate smaller cays, several hundred islands and islets; but of these only twenty or so foster permanent settlements even today (National Geographic Society 1987). Like many of the Lesser Antilles, the Bahama Islands remained virtually ignored by the Spaniards until eventually expropriated by a rival colonial power. England's Charles I finally laid his country's claim to the islands by officially granting them to Sir Robert Heath in 1629 (Barratt 1972, 52). Various colonization efforts ensued, but the Bahamas remained by and large a retreat for Anglo-American freebooters until Woodes Rogers cleared out their New Providence den in 1718.

Athwart Cuba, the Isle of Pines,⁷¹ the Cayman Islands, and the myriad of cays which subtend the Antillean giant's southern coast provided suitable rendezvous for pirate attacks against Cuba and the ever-busy Yucatán Channel. Likewise islands nestled in the many coastal recesses of Hispaniola, from Gonâve in the western *Cul-de-Sac* to the Isla Levantado in the Bay of Samana, made for splendid pirate refuges. Centrally located between the pirate strongholds of Tortuga and Port Royal, the Ile à Vache on the south side of Hispaniola emerged as the principal rendezvous point for combined English-French buccaneer expeditions (see Map 5). As its name indicates, this island and the adjacent mainland also furnished a dependable supply of viands by virtue of feral cattle herds.



Map 6: The San Blas Archipelago--Rendezvous for Buccaneers
On the Darien Coast of Panama

(Drafted by William Hack, 1699, reprinted 1710 and in Kepp 1971b)



**Map 8: Isle of Juan Fernández--Principal South Sea
Outpost of the Buccaneers, from Sharp's
Journal after a Draft by Ringrose**

(MS Sharp/Haak [1680-82] BL Sl.46.a)

In the western Caribbean, the Bay Islands in the Gulf of Honduras offered fresh provisions (water, turtle, hogs), wood, Indian canoes, and good striking access to Puerto Caballos and Trujillo, the principal terminals for the Spanish Honduran trade. For large pirate fleets the protected, commodious south coast of Roatán proved most conducive for careening and making rendezvous, while smaller, more vulnerable buccaneer squadrons preferred Guanaja's leeward lagoon with multiple escape routes between its protective reefs and cays. French corsairs, we recall, had begun resorting to the islands as early as 1536, and by the time of Jackson's cruise English buccaneers were well accustomed to calling there. Though Puritans from Providence Company founded a short-lived colony on Roatán in 1638, roving buccaneers apparently eschewed any attempt at permanent settlement,⁷² constructing instead only temporary camps convenient for cutting logwood, hunting game, launching raids, or maintaining their vessels (Davidson 1974, 40-53).

Changing Seas. For harassing Spaniards along the Isthmus of Panama and the Main, pirates usually resorted to the San Blas Archipelago to refresh, rendezvous, and arrange with the Darien Indians for allied raids to the interior or the Pacific (see Map 6). Once across, South Sea raiders from Oxenham onward typically launched their assaults from the Pearl Islands in the Bay of Panama, or from the *islas* Coiba and Caño further up the coast. Those approaching or exiting the Pacific through the Straits, or round Cape Horn via Drake's Passage, might call at the Falkland Islands on the Atlantic side. The first English interloper to reach this

remote southeasterly group was John Davis in the *Desire*, perhaps more renowned historically for his attempts to discover the Northwest Passage. Davis reached the Falklands quite by accident in 1592 when a storm drove him from Thomas Cavendish's fleet as the latter was making for the Strait of Magellan (Boyson 1924, 21-22).

Two years later Richard Hawkins, son of Sir John, paused there just long enough to name the islands for himself and observe the "goodly ohampion country...[with] great rivers of fresh water" (Birtles 1983, 43). In 1600 the Dutchman Sebald de Weert, thwarted from a South Sea plundering expedition by tempestuous conditions in the Straits, noted the islands (that afterwards bore *his* name) and their many penguins which, for want of a sloop or other small boat, his famished Hollanders were unable to snare (Boyson 1924, 24-25). The English buccaneers Cowley and Dampier attempted to refresh there before shooting the Straits in 1684, but finding neither safe anchorage nor fresh water, determined to move on. John Strong's privateering expedition of 1690 encountered better providence among the Falklands. His men dined heartily on penguins, seals, geese, and ducks, took aboard good quantities of fresh water, but regarded with certain dismay the islands' lack of wood. It was Strong who first attached the name "Fawkland" to the sound which separates the two largest islands (30-32). From 1698 to 1712 the Falklands provided a convenient stopping point for French interlopers from St. Malo bound for the South Sea. In memory of that notorious *cité corsaire*, these sailors renamed the islands the *Malouines*, later transmuted by the Spaniards to *Malvinas*. It was the British privateer Woodes Rogers who, in the course of his plundering

circumnavigation of 1708-1711, cruised by the islands and extended the label of "Falkland" to denote the entire group (32-35). The Falkland Islands proved perhaps too remote, forbidding, or barren (particularly of much needed wood supply) to attract pirates to any greater extent; in fact, among the realm's many refuges they played a rather elusive part throughout the Age of Exploration.⁷³

The Pacific. In the great South Sea, on the Pacific side of Spanish America, various haunts offered anchorage and asylum to the pirates who plundered settlements and shipping from Acapulco to Valdivia. The isle of Gorgona made a convenient halfway stop between Panamá and Guayaquil. Bartholomew Sharp's gang, after crossing the Isthmus in 1680, resorted there on the advice of a Spanish prisoner and spent several days careening and gathering victuals. The Spaniards, it seemed, shunned the island because of its perpetual rainfall, but buccaneers could tolerate a good soaking if it meant they could attend their needs without molestation. Basil Ringrose took this opportunity to sketch a chart of Gorgona and otherwise note its geographic attributes:

The mainland to windward of this island is very low and full of rivers. All along the coast it rains most desperately... We anchored on the South side of the island, at the mouth of a very fine river. There belong to this island about thirty rivers and rivulets, which all fall from the rocks on the several sides of the island. The whole circumference thereof is about three-leagues-and-a-half, being all high and mountainous land, excepting only that side where we cast anchor. Here therefore we moored our ship in the depth of eighteen or twenty fathom water, and began to unrig the vessel. But we were four or five days' space before we could get our sails dry so as to be able to take them from the yards, there falling a shower of rain almost every hour of the day and night...

Our choice and best provisions here were Indian conies,⁷⁴ monkeys, snakes, oysters, conchs, periwinkles,⁷⁵

and a few small turtle, with some other sorts of good fish (Ringrose 1987, 341-43).

Closer to Guayaquil stood the Isla de la Plata, by tradition so named from Francis Drake's visit and subsequent division of spoils among his men, each of whom received a quantity of silver plate.⁷⁶ Sharp's English buccaneers, in fact, preferred to call the place Drake's Isle and likewise retreated there to refit their ships, catch turtle, hunt wild goats, and gamble away their ill-gotten shares (350-53; Dick 1987, 273). Swan, Davis, and Harris rendezvoused at the Isle of Plate before attempting to snare the Lima fleet (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 109); and Picard's men fled there with the spoils of Guayaquil to caulk up their leaky ships (Raveneau de Lussan 1930, 226).

Two outlying groups in the Pacific beckoned to seaworn buccaneers as much for their bounty as for their solitude. One was the Galápagos Islands, straddling the equator about nine hundred miles due west of Quito. Sharp's crew had been heading there when contrary winds forced them instead to put in for Gorgona (Dick 1987, 269), and indeed the islands' position in the doldrums generally rendered them too tedious a voyage even for their Spanish proprietors (Ringrose 1987, 353). Cowley, Wafer, and Dampier reached them under John Cook and Edward Davis with the *Bachelor's Delight* in 1684, hoping to lie low while the clamor aroused by their South Sea invasion died away. Cowley expressed amazement at the number and size of sea and land turtles, "some of which weighed at least 200 Pound weight, which are excellent good Food" (in Hack 1699a, 9). He otherwise amused himself, as one of the first Englishmen to visit these islands, by whimsically naming them after

the British royalty, his fellow buccaneers, and of course himself (see Map 7):

...between York and Albemarle's Island lieth a small one, which my Fancy led me to call Cowley's enchanted Island; for we having had a sight of it upon several Points of the Compass, it appear'd always in as many different forms, sometimes like a ruined Fortification; upon another Point, like a great City, &c (10).

The Islas Galápagos offered fine sandy harbors for anchoring and careening, refreshing air, sweet water, salt, wood, and a delectable variety of fresh meat for the taking. In addition to several species of turtle (from which the archipelago got its name--*galápagos* means tortoise in Spanish), the islands teemed with fish, edible birds, and plump iguanas: "The Guanoes here are fat and large as any that I ever saw; they are so tame, that a Man may knock down twenty in an Hour's Time with a Club" (Dampier 1927, 76). Knowing he would return to this strange and beautiful sanctuary within the course of his South Sea maraudings, Captain Davis also directed his men to deposit in reserve several hundred sacks of flour which they had seized from a Spanish prize off the coast of Peru (82).

Another island cluster, nearly five hundred miles west of Santiago and perhaps even more paradisiacal to scurvy-ridden rovers clawing their way past the ravages of Tierra del Fuego--or headed that way after an arduous South Sea cruise--was the remote Juan Fernández group. Although these islands owed their name to their Spanish discoverer, it was as a sanctuary for Spain's enemies that they became famous. Of all the refuges so far mentioned, this last figures most prominently in the lore of piracy. Fernández reached them in 1563 and stayed only long enough to introduce a herd of

goats which thrived on the steep volcanic slopes and completely reverted to the wild. Three small islands compose the entire archipelago. The largest and closest to the Chilean coast, hence known by the Spaniards as Isla Mas a Tierra, rises abruptly from the sea to a summit of three thousand feet. Despite its imposing façade, it offered sufficient anchorages, a temperate climate, and an abundance of fresh provisions to interlopers (see Map 8). This most accessible and habitable of the three islands, by itself called Juan Fernández (or 'John Fernando') by the buccaneers who frequented it, later acquired, for reasons we shall see, the name Robinson Crusoe as well. Just off its southwest point lies the tiny islet of Santa Clara, and a hundred miles westward rises the precipitous and uninviting Isla Mas Afuera, now known also as the Isla Alejandro Selkirk; but these remained useless even to pirates.

Sharp and his gang, licking their wounds after a disastrous attempt on Coquimbo, straggled in to Juan Fernández on Christmas Day in 1680. On first approach the island appeared completely desolate and inaccessible, and the holiday was observed with no more flourish than a triple volley of cannon fire as the seaworn buccaneers probed for safe riding and a good spot to land. From the ship's initial anchorage on the barren and blustery south side, scouting parties in canoes paddled round the east end to discover more hospitable conditions. From this new road the pirates could safely land and gather in all the necessities: goat meat, wood, and fresh water. Good-sized fish and lobster proved likewise plentiful, and the men found themselves hard put to bring their boats ashore amidst the teeming herds of seals and sea lions.⁷⁷ Here, however, the

buccaneers fell into discord. Sharp and some others favored returning home via Cape Horn at once, but the majority held out for more plundering and even elected a new captain, John Watling, to lead them on. The pirates barely finished careening at Juan Fernández before three Spanish men-of-war chased them off, causing them to leave behind a Miskito Indian named William (Ringrose 1987, 393-400). He was the first in a series of marooned men who made distant Juan Fernández their solitary home.

Captains Eaton and Davis were the next to visit this new pirate outpost when they commenced their South Sea maraudings in 1684. On board the *Bachelor's Delight* veterans from Sharp's expedition, including Dampier and Wafer, were eager to seek out William after a separation of more than three years. Dampier described a poignant reunion:

He saw our Ship the Day before we came to an Anchor, and did believe we were *English*, and therefore kill'd three Goats...and dressed them with Cabbage [palm], to treat us when we came ashore... And when we landed, a *Moskito Indian*, named *Robin*, first leap't ashore, and running to his Brother *Moskito* Man, bracing him, fell flat with his face on the Ground at *Robin's* feet, and was by him taken up also. We stood with pleasure to behold the surprize, and tenderness, and solemnity of this Interview (1927, 67).

Davis' men used the island twice in the course of their South Sea campaign. On their second visit, heading home via Cape Horn late in 1687, they found their little hideaway somewhat changed: "The *Spaniards* had set Dogs ashore at *John Fernando's* also, to destroy the Goats there, that we might fail of Provision."⁷⁸ Nevertheless, three or four of the men, "unwilling to return out of these Seas as poor as they came," elected to remain behind and fend for themselves until some other pirate band should arrive.

We gave them a small Canoa, a Porridge-pot, Axes, Macheats, Maiz, and other Necessaries. I heard since that they planted some of the Maiz, and tam'd some of the Goats, and liv'd on Fish and Fowls... I heard also that these Men were taken by a Privateer-Vessel [John Strong's *Welfare* in 1690]...; and that one of them is since come to England (Wafer 1934, 126-27).

Soon after the outbreak of Queen Anne's War, William Dampier commanded the *St. George* on his third visit to Juan Fernández in 1704. He sailed in consort with Thomas Stradling of the *Cinque Ports*. As always, the island provided safe harbor for heeling and refitting the ships as well as welcome refreshment after the trauma of Cape Horn. Goats were still to be had in plenty, "and a Joint of one of them roasted, with about half a Foot of our Cabbage boiled" supplied the customary feast (Funnell 1729, 14). After a fruitless cruise along the mainland, only the *Cinque Ports* returned to Juan Fernández, so unseaworthy that Stradling's mate, Alexander Selkirk, insisted he would rather remain alone than chance another voyage with a leaky ship and an inept commander. He was duly granted his request, convinced that some privateer or another was sure to come along soon enough (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 149). Over four years later, Captains Woodes Rogers and Edward Cooke finally did. On board was the omnipresent William Dampier, relegated in the twilight of his checkered career to the rank of pilot for the South Sea.

When the *Duke* and *Duchess* reached Juan Fernández on a February evening in 1709, a blazing fire on shore aroused considerable alarm. Even Dampier, who certainly had witnessed many strange events in two previous voyages around the world, must have been amazed to discover the agent responsible. Rogers, in his journal, described the remarkable encounter which followed:

Immediately our pinnace returned from the shore...with a man cloth'd in goat-skins, who look'd wilder than the first owners of them. He had been on the island four years and four months.... His name was Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who had been master of the 'Cinque Ports,' a ship that came here last with Capt. Dampier, who told me this was the best man in her; so I immediately agreed with him to be mate on board our ship.

'Twas he made the fire last night when he saw our ships, which he judg'd to be English. During his stay here he had seen several ships pass, but only two came to anchor, which...he found to be Spanish...and chose to risque dying alone in the Iland, rather than fall into the hands of the Spaniards in these parts, lest they murder, or make a slave of him in the mines...

He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but for the first eight months had much ado to bear up against melancholy, and the terror of being alone in such a desolate place. He built two huts with piemento trees, cover'd them with long grass, and lin'd them with the skins of goats which he killed with his gun as he wanted, so long as his powder lasted, which was but a pound, and that being near spent, he got fire by rubbing two sticks of piemento wood together on his knees. ...Crawfish, which are there as large as lobsters and very good...he sometimes boiled, and at others broiled as he did his goat's flesh, of which he made very good broth, for they are not so rank as ours; he kept an account of 500 that he killed while there, and caught as many more, which he marked on the ear and let go. When his powder fail'd he took them by speed of foot; for his way of living, and continued exercise of walking and running, clear'd him of all gross humours, so that he run with wonderful swiftness thro the woods, and up the rocks and hills, as we perceiv'd when we employ'd him to catch goats for us. ...He was at first much pester'd with cats and rats, that bred in great numbers from some of each species which had got ashore from ships that put in there to wood and water. The rats knaw'd his feet and clothes while asleep, which obliged him to cherish cats with goats flesh; by which many of them became so tame that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon deliver'd him from the rats.

He likewise tam'd some kids, and to divert himself would now and then sing and dance with them and his cats; so that by the care of Providence, and vigour of his youth, being now about 30 years old, he came at last to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitiude and to be very easy (1894, 57-62).

Selkirk's story provided the raw stuff for the now legendary *Robinson Crusoe*;⁷⁹ and though Defoe's fictional mariner tenanted a deserted isle off the Rio Orinoco in the Atlantic, it is the

buccaneers' Pacific retreat that now bears his name. Selkirk might have been disappointed to see his own namesake bestowed on Tierra Mas Afuera, the craggy, distant sister-island where even pirates never ventured to call. Juan Fernández remained a viable outpost for French⁸⁰ as well as English privateers for several years to come.⁸¹ Clipperton and Shelvocke used it in the course of their maraudings, the former depositing yet another pair of self-sentenced exiles there in 1719. Though the British never actually annexed the Islas Juan Fernández as they did the Falklands, plans were repeatedly made to do so (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 46, 209). The remote island sanctuary, crucial as a temporary base for piracy against the Spanish American mainland, owes its lasting fame to the picturesque maroonings which took place there.⁸²

All the above refuges and outposts, by virtue of physical site and strategic situation, fulfilled certain geographic requisites imposed by the exigencies of maritime robbery. Their proximity to towns and shipping lanes had to be close enough to make strikes and retreats possible, yet so remote and sufficiently desolate as to discourage Spanish detection or sustained punitive measures. With a few notable exceptions on the Atlantic side, most of those places described remained nominally Spanish until independence. The buccaneers and their sponsoring nations failed to possess them as permanent bases or strongholds for the very reasons the Spaniards never effectively colonized them: they were too small, too isolated, or too limited in economic potential, despite their unquestionable strategic value but especially given the strained human and capital resources of the colonial powers, to elicit any further

development.⁸³ Nevertheless, to attract even transitory attention from pirates and interlopers, these places had to offer more than just safety and locational convenience. They had to supply good anchorage, fresh water, wood for fuel and nautical repairs, food, and beaches adequate for careening. Because the last two criteria, in particular, struck such a unique geographical chord in the piracy of Spanish America, they merit explanation in greater detail.

Careñages. A perpetual chore for maintaining all wooden hulls was the process of careening. Weeds and fungus, barnacles and other marine animals clinging to the sides and bottoms of ships not only reduced their speed, but also corrupted their planking. In tropical American waters the most serious pests were teredo worms, prolific soft-shelled mollusks which burrowed into the wood itself and could honeycomb a hull over an extended voyage, and mackerel-sized suckfish,⁸⁴ a dozen of which could supposedly turn a lugger into a laggard. Careening involved beaching the ship, unloading her stores and remounting her guns ashore on makeshift earthworks, then heeling her over on one side to permit breaming, i.e. drying, burning, and scraping off the marine growth (see Figure 6). Planking riddled with teredo-worms had to be replaced, the hull recaulked with pitch and coated overall with tallow (sometimes mixed with sulphur) to waterproof the wood and discourage fouling. This process was long and involved, all the worse because it rendered the crew utterly vulnerable to attack without any hope of escape. The perfect careening spot, or *careñage*, therefore needed to be secluded and defensible, preferably with a harbor deep enough to accommodate a small pirate vessel but too shallow to admit a bulky man-of-war.



Figure 6: Careening—Heeling and Breaming a Ship

(from Botting 1978)

Also the beach and tidal pattern of a *carénage* had to be conducive to grounding, heeling, and refloating the ship. Finally, such a place required wood for firing the hull and patching the plank work, as well as a good supply of pitch, tallow, or some other animal grease (seal, sea-lion, or turtle fat) for the protective coating. Not every *carénage* could meet all these demands, and the most favorable locales were highly valued by pirates. The Caribbean abounded more than most seas with suitable hideaways for the job; French privateers operating off Guinea even periodically crossed the Atlantic to clean and refit at St. Lucia. Careening, as onerous a task as it was, had to be faithfully repeated every two to four months; for speed was the essence of the chase (Botting 1978, 57; Mitchell 1976, 55n; Thrower 1980, 136-37; Ritchie 1986a, 10).

Turtling Grounds. Of the local foods which sustained pirates in Spanish America one could easily compile a full volume. Dampier, perhaps better than any of his contemporaries, maintained a detailed account of every plant, fish, reptile, bird, or mammal worth eating and recommended the gustatory advantages of each. The buccaneers owed their very beginning to Hispaniola's free-running herds of swine and cattle. On rugged Juan Fernández they hunted and consumed with equal zeal the caprine descendants of bygone Spanish husbandry. But throughout tropical America, particularly on those secluded coasts untouched by *ganadería*, the most convenient and dependable food supply, and indeed a meat much relished by pirates, was the sea turtle. Various species of turtle abounded in these waters--hawksbills, leatherbacks, ridleys, loggerheads--but the one most highly prized for its sweet, succulent flesh and copious fat

was *Chelonia mydas*, the green turtle. These creatures were so named, according to Dampier, "because their shell is greener than any other" (1927, 79), though Sir Hans Sloane asserted they "were call'd green Turtle from their Fats being of that colour" (1707, xvii).

Be that as it may, they were thoroughly hunted by pirates and everyone else in the region unto near extinction, largely because the female was reckoned the tastiest, "best when with Egg" (xvii), and was most readily captured while in that delicate condition. Though widely consumed, as Dr. Sloane further observed, by "the poorer sort" from all walks of life, the green turtle made an especially suitable foodstuff for sea rovers; it was, quite truly, "a perfect staple for pirates" (Botting 1978, 44). John Hawkins considered its meat "much like veal" (in Parsons 1962, 25), while Dampier esteemed it "extraordinary sweet" (1927, 79). The mild flesh was highly nutritious--and abundant--with body weights occasionally exceeding three hundred pounds. The fat, too, yielded large quantities of oil useful for cooking, or, "instead of Butter, to eat with Doughboys or Dumplings" (92).

Exquemelin, the buccaneer-chronicler of Tortuga, concurred with these gastronomical pronouncements but mentioned one unpleasant side effect: "This fat is so penetrating that when you have eaten nothing but turtle flesh for three or four weeks, your shirt becomes so greasy from sweat you can squeeze the oil out and your limbs are weighed down with it" (1972, 60). The fat even served admirably to caulk a leaky hull (Parsons 1962, 23). Green turtles, above all, were easy to catch, especially when the females came ashore to lay.

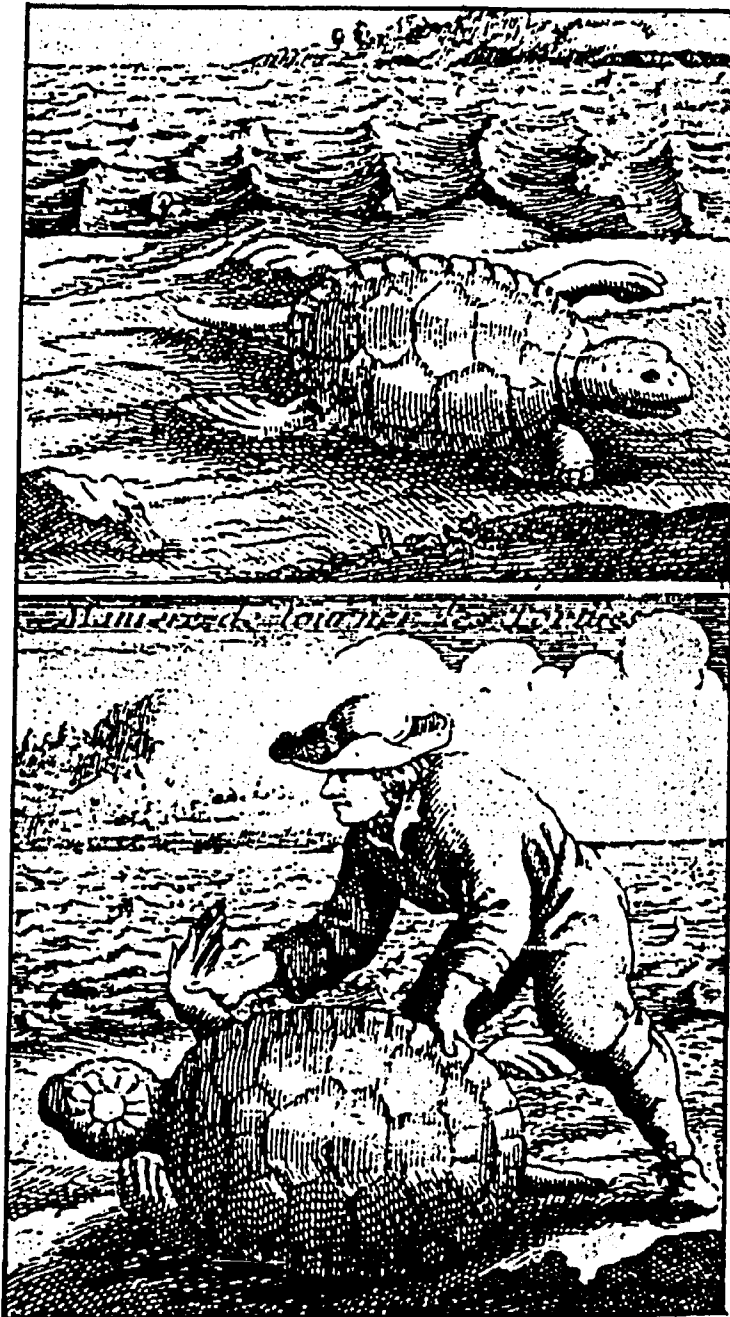


Figure 7: Turning a Sea Turtle

(Originally engraved for Du Tertre 1667
and reproduced in Labat. Reprinted in
Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, 1972)

Then great numbers of them could be turned upon their backs and rendered immobile (see Figure 7), as Exquemelin explained:

No special implements are carried for catching the green turtles (the only kind good to eat) but when these creatures come on shore every night to lay their eggs, they can be levered over by two men with a hand-spike. Once laid on their backs, the turtles cannot budge. When many ships lie waiting to load, the beach is divided so that the men from each ship have a certain stretch of land to clear. In the length of 500 paces as many as a hundred turtles may be turned upside down (1972, 61).

Otherwise, turtles could be netted or harpooned as they swam to the surface, the latter a technique in which the Miskito Indians greatly excelled.⁸⁵ Although "Captain Sharp...showed himself very ingenious in striking them" (Ringrose 1987, 353), the buccaneers, according to Dampier, usually relied directly upon native talent: "*Moskito Indians*, who always bear Arms amongst the Privateers, ...are much valued by them for striking Fish, and Turtle or Tortoise, and Manatee or Sea-Cow...for one or two of them in a ship will maintain 100 men" (1927, 11-15). The Miskito named William, first lone occupant of Juan Fernández, was probably such a conscript. Most importantly, unlike meat on the hoof, turtles stored aboard ship could survive for weeks without food or any attention, save keeping them flipped helpless on their backs (Woodbury 1951, 109-10). Finally, because their feeding and laying habits were seasonally and spatially predictable (Dampier was keenly observant of these patterns), green turtles provided a dependable and generous food supply worthy of influencing the very course of a raid.

George Woodbury once asserted, "The green turtle of the West Indies, perhaps as much or even more than any other native factor,

was responsible for the concentration of piratical activity in this part of the world" (1951, 106). He may well have been right. Even a cursory index of the feeding and breeding grounds of *Chelonia mydas*, both present and extinct, reads like a gazetteer of piracy in Spanish America (see Parsons 1962, 23-39 and endleaf map). In the Caribbean were the Bahamas, Cuba's South Cays, Mona, the Isle of Aves, Dominica, Cubagua, Trinidad, Curaçao, the Isla Mujeres, Cockscomb Coast, Bay Islands, Miskito Shore, and Tortuguero Beach (the only sizeable nesting ground remaining in the region) just south of the Río San Juan. Also prominent were the Cayman Islands, once the green turtles' most prolific breeding spot in all the Americas, but now devoid of the species. Henry Morgan, the great buccaneer-turned-politico, considered the turtle-fisheries of the Caymans, as well as those of his former rendezvous, the Ile à Vache, of utmost importance to the colonial interests of England and France (Sloane 1707, lxxxvii). In the Gulf of Mexico turtles were found at the logwood enclave of Laguna de Términos, where Dampier had "heard of a monstrous Green turtle once taken...that was four foot deep from the back to the belly, and the belly six foot broad" (1927, 79), and also at Dry Tortugas, where Hawkins may have been the first Englishman in America to eat of their flesh (Parsons 1962, 25). In the South Sea they teemed along the Isla de la Plata, the Galápagos, Coiba, Cabo Blanco (Nicoya Peninsula), the Islas Très Marias, Cabo Corrientes, and, far to the west, at Clipperton Island (named for the privateer). The geographical correspondence of green turtles and piracy is indeed striking, and it was by no means coincidental. Dampier explained it quite simply: "when we careen our Ships, we

choose commonly such Places where there is plenty of Turtle" (1927, 15-16). Perhaps it was fitting, or rather ironic, that the fateful shoal which scuttled Spanish America should be called *Tortuga*.

Buccaneer-Logwood Coasts

Philip Gosse, that enthusiastic connoisseur of all things piratical, remarked that "a pirate was not a pirate from the cradle to the gallows" (1924, 9). He was referring to those who began their careers as honest seamen, but his statement applies equally well to buccaneers who punctuated decidedly sanguinary pursuits with the more-or-less peaceful occupation of cutting logwood for the European dye industry. To the Spaniards (when they were not actually abetting the contraband trade) it was just another form of trespassing and theft, and the authorities did not treat kindly those interlopers whom they periodically set out to apprehend.⁸⁶ Prior to the invention of synthetic dyes in the nineteenth century, coloring agents for textiles, ink, and leather had to be derived from natural, usually organic materials. In Mesoamerica, the aboriginal civilizations had long extracted a beautiful scarlet stain, called cochineal, from certain scale insects which infested the prickly-pear cactus (Donkin 1977). Along with this native industry the Spaniards adopted the cultivation of indigo, a crop which yielded a rich and steadfast blue. A third source, consisting of variously tinted heartwoods from divers species of local trees, completed the pigmentary triumverate of Spanish America (West and

Augelli 1976, 274-75). Pirates became well acquainted with the value of these colorful cargoes and happily confiscated them from Spanish merchantmen.

The buccaneers never personally engaged in the tedious cultivation of indigo or oochineal, but they did on occasion commit themselves to felling dyewood. It was not an easy or pleasant task; it required hard relentless labor in swampy and pestilent environs. It was however lucrative,⁸⁷ somewhat adventurous, and an immediate extraction of Spain's American assets which demanded minimal temporal or spatial attachment. It was, in short, a perfect expression of their *modus operandi* and independent lifestyle. Dye-yielding trees occurred naturally in various parts of the region. South American brazilwood gave its name to the Portuguese sector of that continent, and thickets of dyewood were likewise harvested in the Antilles.

Along the Gulf and Caribbean coasts, from the Bay of Campeche to the Rio San Juan, grew the most prolific and remunerative stands of logwood, or *Haematoxylon campechianum*, and this, in part, is what attracted the buccaneers. Crushed and boiled in water, the heartwood of this short, crooked tree yielded a splendid basic fixing dye which additives eventually rendered from yellow to red to black. The Spaniards had been cutting the stuff since the mid-sixteenth century, but most of the swamps and low forests in which it thrived remained quite vulnerable to poaching, especially by the British. In England the purloined logwood fetched up to £110 per ton, though the cutters themselves received considerably less (Horwich and Lyon 1990, 49; Wilson 1936, 1-8; Craig 1969, 54).

The buccaneers concentrated their logwood and ancillary smuggling operations along three coastal strips (see Map 3). The southernmost, running from the Rio San Juan to eastern Honduras, became known after its Indian inhabitants⁸⁸ as the Miskito Shore (also Mosquitia or the Mosquito Coast). This may have been the first area of English settlement but certainly remained least profitable in terms of logwood exploitation. Fronting the Gulf of Honduras to the west was the the Cookscomb Coast, where buccaneer-woodsmen roughly established the territory of former British Honduras (or modern Belize). Clear round the Yucatán Peninsula they set up camps along the Bay of Campeche, especially in the Laguna de Términos. These places, unlike any of the pirate haunts yet described, were no mere temporary resorts. Neither were they the established strongholds yet to be discussed. The encampments were makeshift and the population transient, but the sustained presence of buccaneers and their countrymen in these parts qualified them as rudimentary settlements, the effects of which remain today. More than logwood accounted for the pirates' magnetism to these shores; coastal morphology also played a part:

The offshore waters of each of these coastal areas are shoal and strewn with coral reefs and cays. Moreover, the coastline is frayed with hundreds of small mangrove-bordered tidal inlets. Such conditions made for difficult navigation but afforded ideal hideouts for pirates and smugglers (West and Augelli 1976, 292).

Here, as the very name 'Cockscomb' suggests,⁸⁹ were the New World versions of the labyrinthine, continental pirate coasts classified by Semple and Whittlesey. Here no isolating, unproductive mountain backdrop discouraged legitimate colonization or authoritarian

control, but a swampy and tropical hinterland effected much the same result.

Miskito Shore. By the early 1630s, English traders from the new and short-lived colony at Providence Island (about 150 miles due east of central Mosquitia) established their first station for trade with the Indians at Cape Gracias a Dios. Similar enclaves soon sprang up farther down the coast. Bluefields, named for a Dutch privateer in the employ of the English,⁹⁰ developed most appreciably of all these settlements by virtue of its relatively good harbor (see Map 9)--a rare geographic asset in these parts (Floyd 1967, 18-21). As English interests turned from illegal trade to piracy, the Miskito Indians joined ranks with the buccaneers. English and Dutch privateers relied on Miskito allies as much for supplying intelligence and combative vigor as for the procurement of fresh victuals. These aboriginal tribes, later mixed with African and European blood, played the same crucial role in maintaining Spain's enemies in Mosquitia as the *cimarrones* and Darien Indians did in Panama. English buccaneers in particular were keenly aware of their debt, as Dampier himself was quick to acknowledge:

[I]t is very rare to find Privateers destitute of one or more of them, when the Commander, or most of the Men are *English*; but they do not love the *French*, and the *Spaniards* they hate mortally. When they come among the Privateers, they get the use of Guns, and prove very good Marks-Men: They behave themselves very bold in fight, and never seem to flinch nor hold back...

The *Moskito's* are in general very civil and kind to the *English*, of whom they receive a great deal of Respect, both when they are aboard their ships, and also ashore... We always humour them, letting them go any whither as they will, and return to their Country in any vessel bound that way, if they please (1927, 16-17).



Map 9: "Blewfield's Bay" on the Miskito Shore.
Named after the Dutch Buccaneer, Blauvelt
(from Captain Joseph Speer's *West-India Pilot*, 1772)

When buccaneer raids against the Honduran ports moved the Spaniards to destroy the fledgling English bases on Providence Island and Roatán in 1641-42, the inaccessible settlements of the Miskito Shore--where woodcutting⁹¹ and smuggling developed into a profitable alternative--remained festering and unchecked, an endemic pool of piratical pathogen biding its time till the next outbreak (Floyd 1967, 23-25). Later, with the English takeover of Jamaica in 1655, woodcutters and buccaneers flourished in even greater numbers along the Cockscomb and Campeche coasts to the north.

Cockscomb Coast. The earliest appearance of logwood-buccaneering settlements on the Cockscomb Coast (modern Belize) remains somewhat obscure. This area, to be sure, is one of those in pirate scholarship where legend, conjecture, and documented fact have become hopelessly confused. According to E.O. Winzerling, although "the Cockscomb Coast...was never settled by the Elizabethans," it may have served as a refuge for corsairs, beginning with Captain Andrew Barker's men, as early as 1576 (1946, 24-25). Within twenty years, he asserted, Captain William Parker "knew of the logwood growing in the lower reaches of the Belize River...and used the...Cockscomb Coast regularly as a base for operating against the Spaniards" (26-27; cf. Caiger 1951, 20). Parker, at any rate, apparently was the first Englishman to mention the use and value of logwood, "good to dye withall," incident to his raid against Campeche in 1597 (in Dobson 1973, 47). After 1627 the Dutch privateer Cornelius Jol⁹² operated likewise as "a regular visitor" to the coast and even left his name to Jol's Hole in the Turneffe Islands (Winzerling 1946, 29-30). Various authors have

attributed the first smuggling stations and consequent logwood settlements here, like the initial enclaves of Mosquitia, to Puritan colonization from Providence Island in the 1630s.⁹³

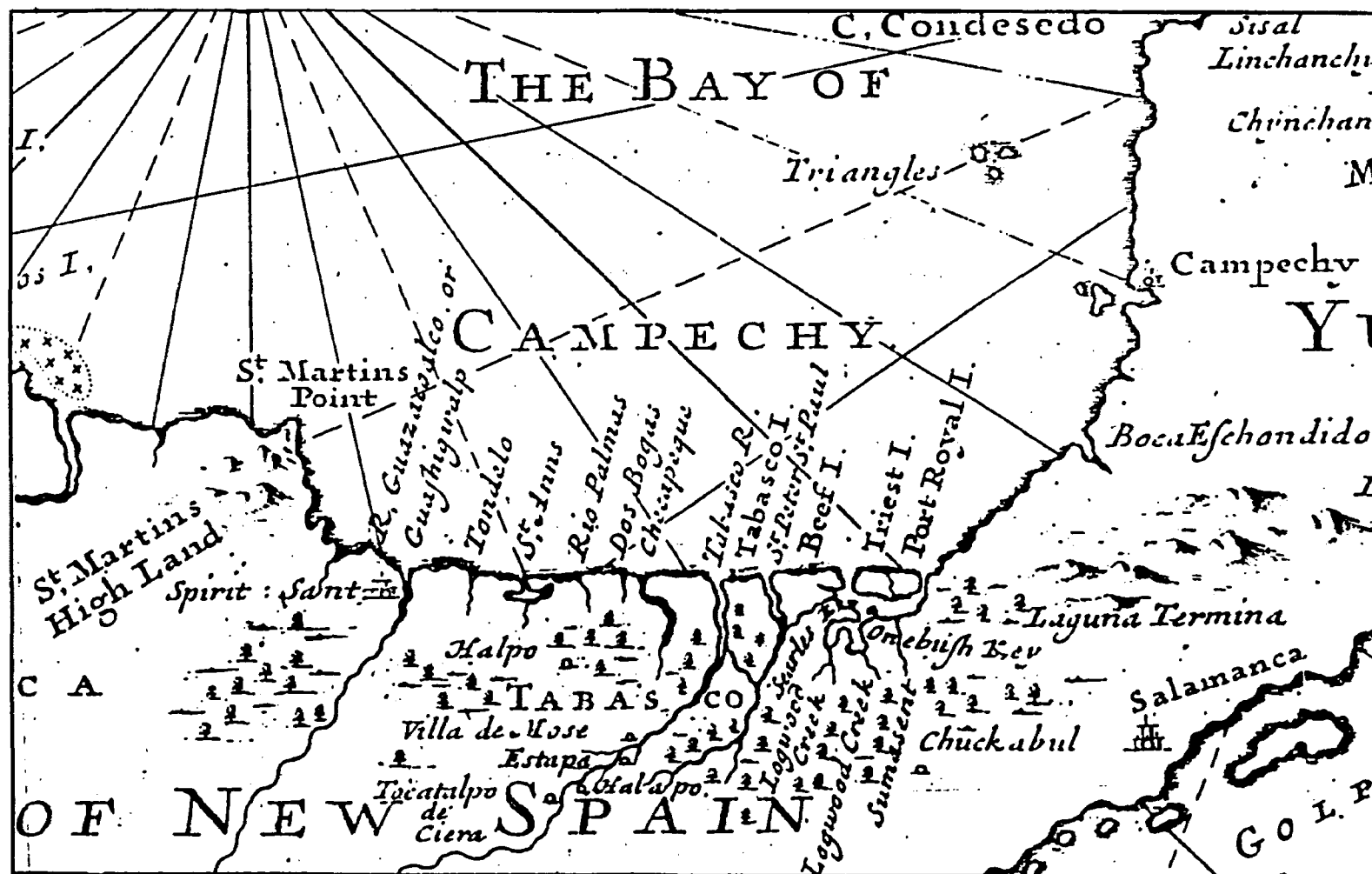
Popular and scholarly tradition has it that Belize was founded by and named for a British buccaneer named Wallace, Wallace, or Willis.⁹⁴ Bancroft identified this legendary figure as one Peter Wallace, a Scottish buccaneer supposed to have settled at the mouth of the Belize River with eighty refugee woodcutters from Campeche in the latter seventeenth century (1886, 624). Others have attempted to connect the founder with a certain Willis of Tortuga, mentioned by Charlevoix, and that would date his arrival at about 1641 (Dobson 1973, 51; cf. Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 13-15). A Guatemalan historian named Asturias, however, believed Wallace was a corsair lieutenant under Raleigh who settled on the Cockscomb Coast as early as 1617 (Burdon 1931, 3). These theories and others were compiled in the *Archives* and doubtlessly perpetuated by Burdon, who himself cautiously recommended "that no definite Settlement was ever deliberately founded. Occupation presumably came into being gradually, from individual Buccaneers, first seeking refuge and later staying long enough to cut and ship the [log]wood" (1931, 3).

In fact there is no proof that the first European settlers of the coast were buccaneers, though the possibility remains a distinct one. From the 1670s onward, several famous pirate captains are known or believed to have cut logwood along the Gulf of Honduras, among them John Coxon, Bartholomew Sharp, Captain Yankey, Nicholas Van Horn, Edward Low, and possibly even Edward Teach, alias Blackbeard (Joseph 1980, 74-76). In aggregate, the mostly British

frontiersmen from the Cockscomb Coast northward--smugglers, woodcutters, and pirates--came to be known as Baymen (after the Bay of Honduras) and like their brethren in Mosquitia found success only through the help of indigenous allies and black slaves (West and Augelli 1976, 293-94). The Baymen, in any event, established initial coastal footholds at the mouth of the Belize River, at Stann Creek, and at Point Placentia (Parsons 1954, 8). The tendency of logwood stands to grow along stream channels only encouraged inland penetration.

Laguna de Términos. It might seem peculiar that buccaneer-woodsmen flourished as long as they did on the very doorstep of Campeche, a prominent Spanish settlement on the Gulf coast of the Yucatán Peninsula. That vulnerable port, we must remember, suffered difficulties enough just defending its own harbor.⁹⁵ The illicit logwood cutters were prepared, moreover, depending on the strength of opposition, to defend or forsake their livelihood at a moment's call. Sir Hans Sloane, colonial physician and confidant to the buccaneers, recapitulated the situation:

Several Persons who used the Logwood Trade...inform'd me, that at about fifteen Leagues from the Town of Campeche, are two Creeks, the Eastern and Northern, in which last they cut Logwood. This is call'd the Logwood-River, the Inhabitants live in Huts on each side of this narrow Creek, near Two hundred English, and are ready on the appearance of any Enemy to hinder their landing by firing on them on each side, every one having his Firelock and other Arms ready... The English, who have lived there many years, Cut and Sell it to the Sloops for about Three Pound per Tun, for which the Sloops bring them Cloathing, Viotuals, Rum, Sugar, &c... The Spaniards who are offended by this settlement equipp'd some Periaguas and Hulks against them; but before they were ready they were burnt by the English... The English have a place stronger than their Huts...and when a Strength much greater than theirs comes against them, they retire to the Woods (1707, lxxxii-lxxxiii).



Map 10: Laguna de Términos--Detail from William Dampier's Chart of the "Bay of Campechy" (1729)

Dr. Sloane was describing the Laguna de Términos, of all the logwood enclaves the one most closely associated with historical pirates. Parker and possibly other corsairs of his time, though unlikely to have out or settled there themselves, were well aware of the local product and of its value.⁹⁶ English buccaneers from Jamaica were raiding Spanish operations near Campeche at least by 1662. Initially, the pickings were easy. Vast stockpiles of rubiginous heartwood, already felled and sectioned by Indian labor, lay waiting for shipment--as completely unguarded as Porto Bello's silver wedges in days of yore.

By 1669 the buccaneers found themselves obliged to dig in and out the stuff themselves, first at Loggerhead Key, at adjacent Cape Catoche, and on Cozumel, but later within the productive Laguna de Términos itself (MS 1672, BL Eg.2395, f.482; Joseph 1974, 22-24). The swampy shoreline of this inlet was protected by a compound island at the mouth of the lagoon, and this the buccaneers chose as their principal base. The eastern portion they called Port Royal in honor of their Jamaican stronghold, the western end Trist Island, a name bespeaking importance as their primary rendezvous⁹⁷ (see Dampier's chart--Map 10) The entire area was completely dissected by creeks in which logwood flourished, merging to the west with Tabasco via the Isle of Beef. As that last-named place suggests, the area abounded not only with logwood, but also with feral cattle. Hunting these provided meat, hides, and a lifestyle which harkened back to the buccaneers' origins on Hispaniola. Various piratical luminaries are known to have frequented these grounds. Captain John Coxon (or Coxen) of Porto Bello fame, a decade before his successful

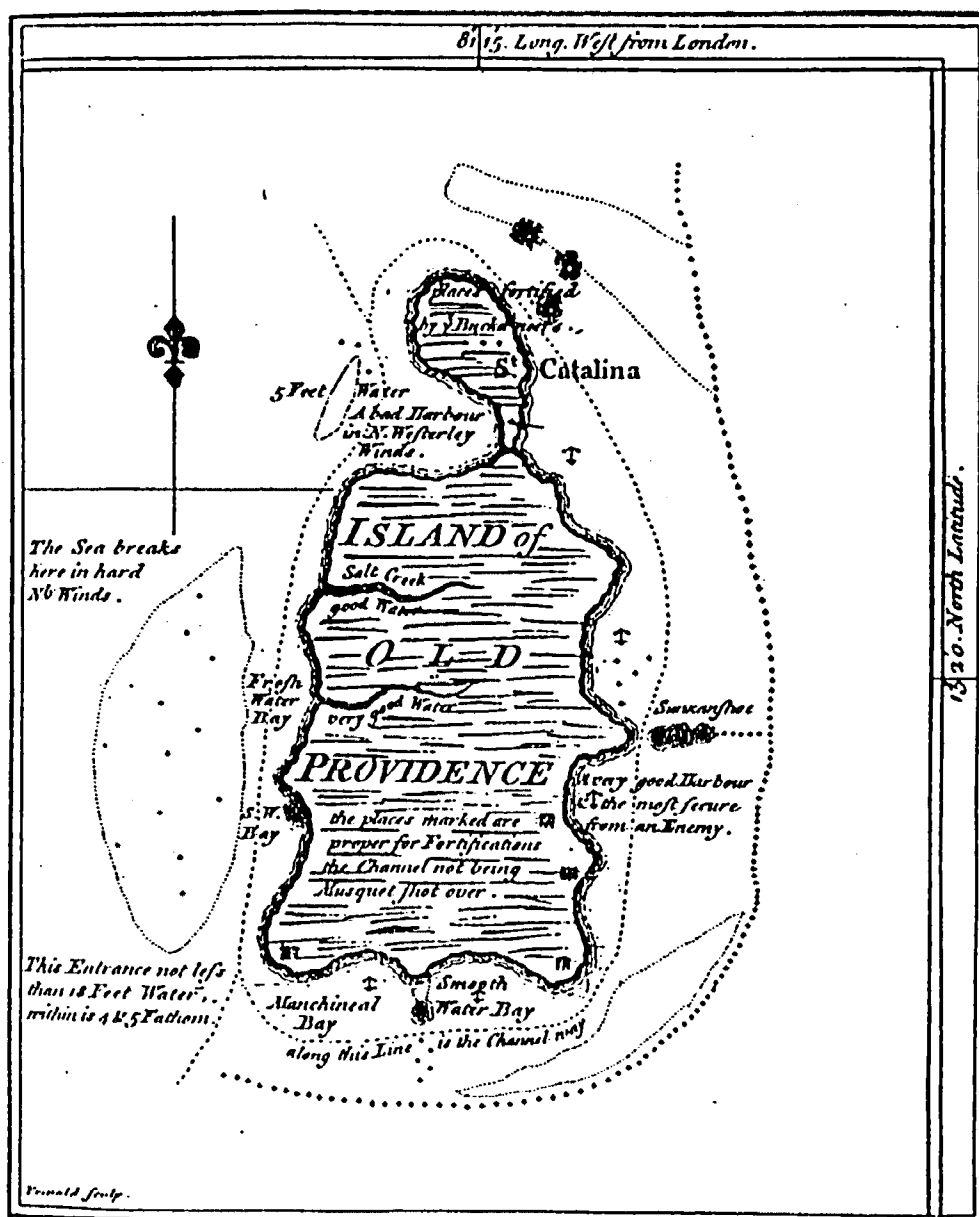
engagement against that city and subsequent crossing of Darien, was to be found chopping away in the swamps of Yucatán and Cozumel. With him was Captain William Coxen, perhaps literally a brother of the coast, and together they "used the Trade of Logwood for about 2 years & A Halfe" (MS 1672, BL Eg.2395, f.481). John Coxon's long and variegated career (fl. 1660s-1689) always brought him back to the logwood camps of Yucatán and the Gulf of Honduras, and his exploits are closely linked with early British settlement on these coasts (Joseph 1974, 25-27; 1980, 76-79). More renowned in this connection, having sojourned twice among the buccaneer-woodsmen (1675-76) and later writing about it, was the ever-viatic William Dampier. His entertaining *Voyages to Campeachy* remains the most comprehensive, colorful account of the Laguna de Términos and its raucous denizens, dregs of the buccaneering society who tenaciously clung to a vanishing way of life:

Privateers who had hitherto lived upon plundering the *Spaniards*, were put to their shifts; for they had prodigally spent whatever they got, and now wanting Subsistence, were forced to go to *Petit Guavas*, where the Privateer-Trade still continued, or into the Bay for *Logwood*---The more Industrious sort of them came hither, yet even these...thought it a dry Business to toil at Cutting Wood. They were good Marks-Men, and so took more delight in Hunting; but neither of those Employments affected them so much as Privateering; therefore they often made Sallies out in small Parties among the nearest *Indian Towns*; where they plundered and brought away the *Indian Women* to serve them at their Huts, and sent their Husbands to be sold at *Jamaica*; besides they had not forgot their old Drinking-bouts, and would still spende 30 or 40*l.* at a sitting aboard the Ships that came hither from *Jamaica*; carousing and firing of Guns three or four Days together (1729, Vol.II, 53-54).

Even this outlet for piratical aggressions was bound to close. Economics, political opposition, and Spanish military retaliation eventually converged sufficiently to oust the loggers from the

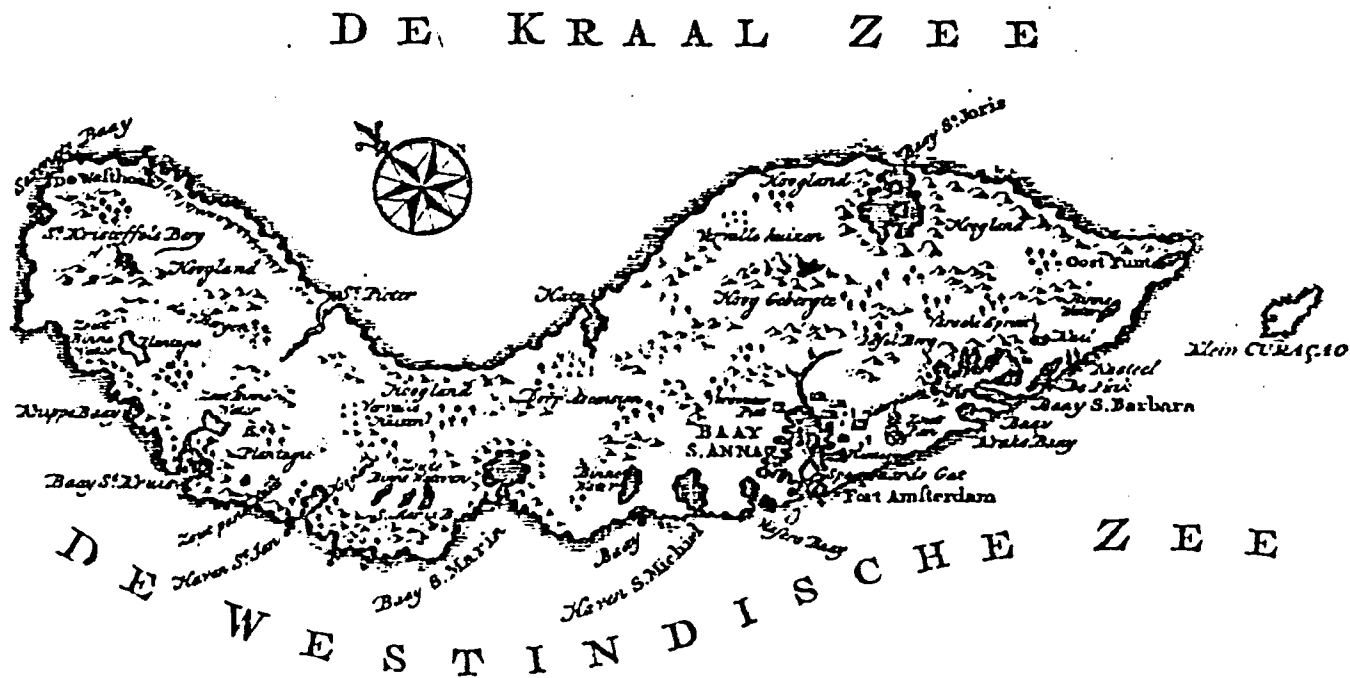
Yucatán once and for all. Interlopers ended up felling more than just logwood; by breaking the Spanish monopoly on the product they also cut its European market price--drastically--from £110 per ton before 1660 to just £16 by 1717--and even more so after the period under study. Nevertheless, an average cutter in the eighteenth century could probably count on over £50 profit a year; but neither British nor Spanish politicians could agree, even among themselves, to a policy of international settlement and exploitation of the logwood stands. By 1716, in the Laguna de Términos at any rate, the Spaniards clinched the matter with a military strike that replaced British encampments on the isle of Trist with a permanent Spanish garrison and effective control over the entire lagoon (Joseph 1974, 34-48; 1980, 71).

The degree to which piracy and the logwood trade overlapped or complemented one another has possibly been exaggerated in the literature. It would indeed be inadvisable to think of every logwood cutter as a part-time buccaneer or even a reformed one. The rigorous but potentially remunerative life of the Bayman must have appealed to a broad spectrum of colonial laborers and entrepreneurs: ex-planters, freed or escaped bondsmen, sailors, religious mavericks, adventurers of every sort. That pirates worked and lived among this throng is beyond question, and the survival of places bearing pirates' names indicates they played a significant role in the discovery and settlement of these coasts.



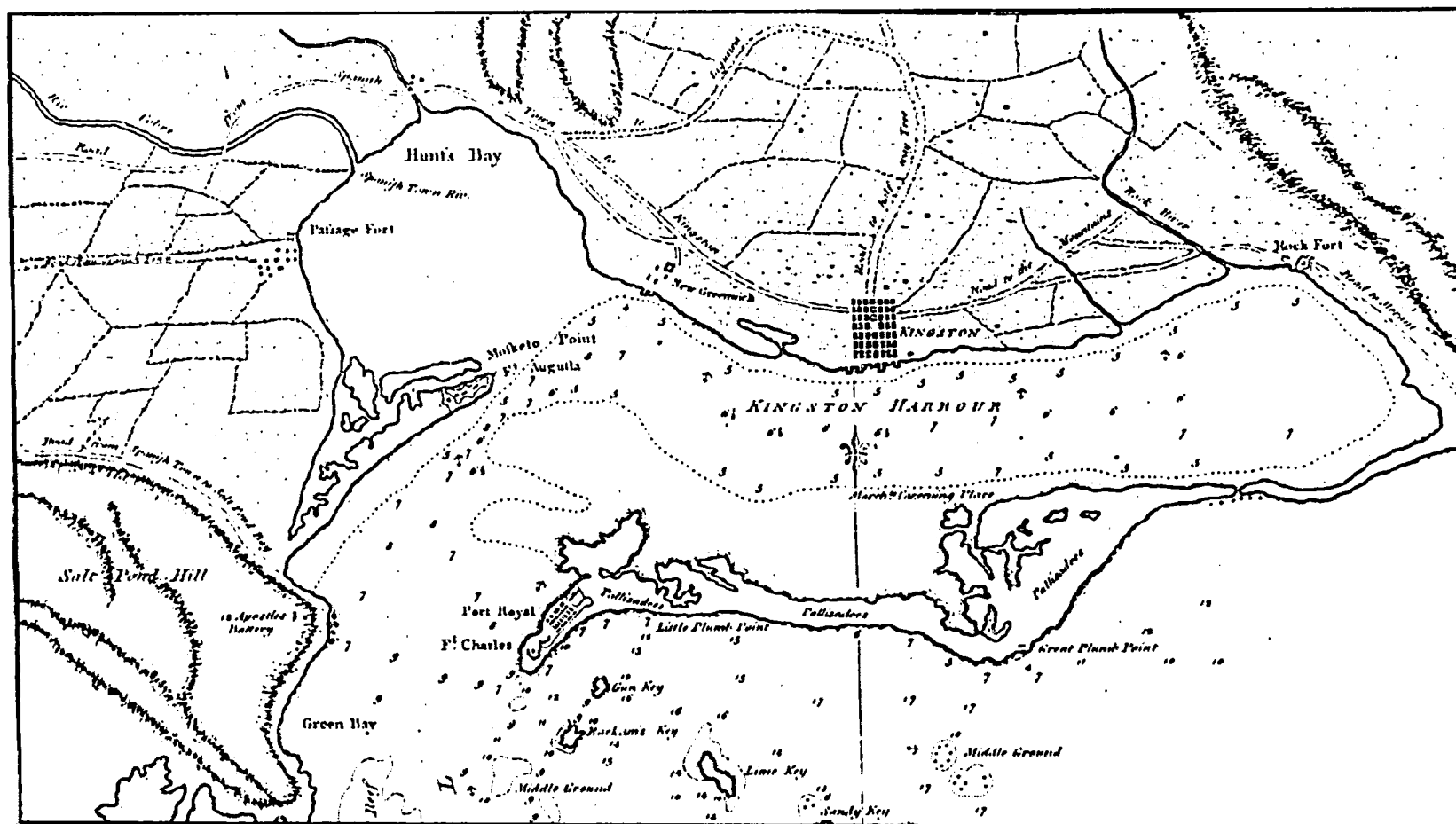
**Map 11: Providence Island in the Western Caribbean--
Early Seventeenth Century Stronghold of
Puritans and Pirates**

(from Joseph Speer's *West-India Pilot*, c. 1766,
reprinted in Cruikshank 1935)



Map 12: Curaçao--the Dutch Stronghold

(Eighteenth-century engraving, reprinted in Goslinga 1985)



Map 13: Port Royal, Jamiaca and its Harbor

(from Joseph Speer's *Nest-India Pilot* of 1766.
reprinted in Howse and Sanderson 1973)

Pirate Bastions

Finally we turn to piratical establishments where the means and motives of settlement are more easily ascertained. These were pirate strongholds, or fortified bases, a half dozen of which held sway in the Caribbean, and none at all in the Pacific. Ramparts and redoubts were the most obvious, though not the only distinguishing characteristics of such places. Like any pirate haunt, they had to be strategically located for maximum striking capability. Pirate strongholds, however, were settlements of permanent intent and as such had to be tenable as well. Fortifications alone could not guarantee their survival. A friendly or neutral hinterland was also necessary to provide sustenance, personnel, a market for captured goods, a buffer, at times even a refuge. True, every stronghold was an island, but only in the most literal sense.

Islands were naturally the easiest territories to capture and maintain. Without broader political affiliations, however--and these had to derive from the colonial will of England, Holland, and France--the buccaneer bastions could never have arisen. The ability to grant commissions was ultimately what gave the pirate stronghold its power, purpose, and prestige. Finally, because all such bases were established as ports, they had to possess good harbors, docking facilities, and the kinds of recreational opportunities which have always attracted sailors. Pirate bastions, we have noted, were a geographical trademark of the buccaneers. The corsairs never succeeded in founding any, though at least one base survived well into piracy's golden years as a topographic monument to the picaroons. Arguably the first and most formative pirate stronghold

in Spanish America was Tortuga, that harmless-looking island perched jauntily, like a tiny cocked hat, atop western Hispaniola. From this diminutive rock buccaneers of mixed nationalities launched decisive raids against the Spaniards for half a century. But the story of Tortuga, its successor Petit-Goâve, and the eventual incorporation of both into French colonial Saint-Domingue is the subject of our next chapter. Presently we will examine the onetime capitals of British, Dutch, and Anglo-American pirates.

Providence Island. The very geologic structure of Providence Island, "an imposing volcanic plug towering 1,100 feet above the sea," invokes the image of an insular fortress (Parsons 1954, 7). Moreover its strategic situation—150 miles east of the Miskito Shore, 290 miles north-northwest of Porto Bello, and 430 miles southwest of Port Royal—was for certain purposes unmatched in the Caribbean. Of all the pirate strongholds it offered the best striking capability against the cross-Panama trade and any traffic through the Río San Juan. The Spaniards even learned to re-route the Havana-bound *galeones* well clear of Providence Island. Finally it provided the springboard for English settlement of the Miskito Shore, the Bay Islands, and the Cookscomb Coast. Because other basic facts of geography worked against the place, however, its crucial and eventful career as a pirate bastion was relatively brief. To the Spaniards it was known, since 1527 at any rate, as the Isla Santa Catalina (8), but its economic potential remained too slight to warrant further notice. Dutch privateers apparently were the first to resort there on a regular basis, but they made no effort to establish a permanent base (Burns 1954, 206). For the

company of English Puritans who decided to colonize it in 1629, the locational choice was "almost foolhardy...in the very jaws of the Spaniards"; but to the pirate-minded Earl of Warwick, chief promoter of the influential Providence Island Company, the strategem of the move outweighed its riskiness (Newton 1933, 172-73).

The physical site of the island base was fundamentally sound. Fresh water and timber were plentiful, and suitable harbors punctuated the indented shorelines of the eastern and southern coasts. Natural security was likewise admirable, particularly for safeguarding the commodious but sometimes windy Catalina Harbor to the northwest. A system of reefs and oays circumscribed harbor approach to a highly defensible channel, and an unassailable northern prurruption provided ultimate refuge in time of siege. The Dutch pirate Bluefields (actually Blauvelt), already an habitué of Providence when the English arrived in 1629, suggested a plan for the island's defense. Those "places fortified by y^e Buokaneers," as well as the canal created later⁹⁸ to insulate the bulwarks from the mainland, can be noted on a chart from Captain Joseph Speer's *West-India Pilot* of 1772 (Map 11). The combination of natural and man-made defenses indeed staved off a Spanish assault in 1635 (Buckholtz 1987), an event identified by Newton as sparking an irrevocable "change in the character of Providence from an experiment in Puritan colonisation to a privateering stronghold" (1933, 175-76). Captain Nathaniel Butler emerged as the colonial governor and pirate chieftan after 1638, consummating his raids in the Gulf of Honduras with the capture of Trujillo in 1639. To ransom their homes the luckless citizens of that town disbursed bullion and indigo to the

tune of 16,000 pieces of eight (181). The Governor of Providence served as a legitimizing agent for English as well as Dutch privateers by issuing letters of marque and reprisal. William Jackson, we recall, began his highly successful career under such a commission.

The Spaniards, understandably, were much concerned about these developments and resolved to squelch these pirates in their own nest. In 1640 a punitive force of a thousand soldiers arrived in a *flotilla* of warships from Cartagena, but even these could not dislodge the buccaneers from their rocky citadel. It remained the task of Don Francisco Diaz de Pimienta, commander of the *galeones*, to effectively pacify the defiant brood after his arrival at Cartagena in 1641. Even then it took two thousand men, nine warships, and the aid of a renegade Moorish pirate to navigate the island's hazardous channel. Almost the entire population of Providence--over 400 men, women, and children--became his prisoners, but Pimienta treated them humanely (Newton 1933, 190-91).

The Spaniards continued to occupy the island, if only to keep it out of enemy hands, for a critical and nearly continuous period of almost thirty years (Rowland 1935). Though it never reverted to the full status of stronghold after that hiatus from piracy, the buccaneers were far from done with it. Mansvelt (Mansveldt or Mansfield), possibly like Blauvelt a Dutch refugee from Providence,⁹⁹ had recaptured the island only briefly during a campaign of 1666. It remained up to his protégé Henry Morgan to wrest the place decisively from Spanish control in 1670. That year, on Christmas Eve, Morgan and nearly two thousand buccaneers regained

the place without a shot, and from this former bastion he launched the celebrated assault which would secure his fame and fortune. His intention may not have been to restore Providence Island as an English pirate capital, for by this date Port Royal had already assumed that role. Certainly he repossessed it as a halfway station and as a source of informants for a more immediate purpose: reducing San Lorenzo de Chagres for the ultimate objective of sacking Panamá. In fact, before weighing anchor from Providence in January of 1671, he took pains to demolish the fortifications and spike the guns. Providence Island, he determined, would not be left as a stronghold for either side (Earle 1981, 11-26, 183-86).

Providence was suited in many respects to become a buccaneer bastion *par excellence*. Its site was unsurpassable, its strategic situation unique. It was, however, a piratical incursion which proved too far ahead of its time, and the wonder is that it lasted as long as it did. Spain's colonial competitors matched her expansion in the Caribbean realm move for move. The Antilles provided the original focus of settlement, and exploitation continued westward and southward toward Central America and along the Main. The founding of Providence Island was a brilliant and daring stroke into the western frontier, but its English executors left themselves overly isolated and utterly vulnerable to reprisal. No stronghold in and of itself is truly secure. When Spanish opposition reached critical mass in 1641, there was nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, and no one to succour the colonists of Providence Island. The closest English settlements were in the Lesser Antilles, clear on the other side of the Caribbean and fully

preoccupied with their own survival. The Providence Islanders of the 1630s, in fact, owed their brief but influential heyday to the diversion of Spanish forces by Dutch privateers, who were busily building their own base over 800 miles to the east (Newton 1933, 173).

Curaçao. Historians, it seems, have been reluctant to describe the earliest ingressions of the Dutch as acts of piracy. The Netherlands, indeed, was the last of Spain's three most powerful contenders to join in the colonial scramble. It may be true, as Cornelius Goslinga claimed, that the Hollanders' initial attraction to Spanish America was for its salt pans rather than its pieces of eight (1979, 20). Moreover, perhaps consistent with their national image, the Dutch restricted their piracy to an efficient minimum, forsaking it at the earliest opportunity for more stable and profitable enterprises, such as smuggling, and ultimately for legitimate planting and trade. Certainly by the end of the era, even the English 'Captain Johnson' was compelled to admit that

during the long Peace I have not so much as heard of a Dutch Pirate. It is not that I take them to be honestest than their neighbors, but when we account for it it will perhaps be a reproach to ourselves for our want of industry. The reason I take to be that after a war, when the Dutch ships are laid up, they have a fishery where their seamen find immediate business and as comfortable bread as they had before (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 17-18).

Be that as it may, the Dutch contributed their share of pirates as we have already seen, and their principal base in the Caribbean became the island of Curaçao.

In contrast to Providence Island, Curaçao was of more appreciable size, poised directly over the heart of the Spanish

Main, and already occupied by Spaniards and Indians when a Dutch expeditionary force evicted them in 1634.¹⁰⁰ Salt to sustain Holland's booming herring industry indeed encouraged the Dutch West India Company to seize Curaçao and the two smaller islands, Bonaire and Aruba, flanking it on either side. With hefty fortifications and a garrison stationed on the central island, the natural salt pans of all three could be mined for a handsome profit. More significant to Dutch interests, however, was the acquisition of "a sally-port 'tending to the detriment of Spain and the relief of the Republic'" (Hartog 1968, 82). *Pie de Palo* Jol arrived in 1635 to secure the island and inaugurate its service as a privateering stronghold. Boldly positioned in the path of busy traffic along the Main, Curaçao soon emerged as the center of Dutch colonial power in the Caribbean (Newton 1933, 166-67; Goslinga 1971, 234, 265-70).

One can easily appreciate the consternation caused the Spaniards by the establishment of a Dutch stronghold in the very track of the *Tierra Firme galeones*. In 1642 the Governor of neighboring Venezuela, Ruy Fernández de Fuenmayor, resolved to eradicate the threat. Eight years earlier, when Dutch privateers began lining their nest on Curaçao, Fuenmayor had led a victorious punitive strike against the fledgling buccaneer base on Tortuga. Now he arrived on Bonaire fully intent on repeating his success. A spy was sent to Curaçao to reconnoiter the main island's defenses. Though his purpose was obvious, the man found gracious reception from Governor Peter Stuyvestant (then still in possession of both legs), who ceremoniously toasted the greatness of Spain and afterwards permitted his visitor a leisurely tour of Curaçao's

defense works. After receiving the spy's discouraging report, Fuenmayor aborted the attack (Goslinga 1979, 27-28). The fortification of Curaçao's two principal harbors, the bays of St. Anna and St. Barbara on the island's southeast side (see Map 12), was indeed an impressive feat of military engineering. Securing this coast was a triad of massive fortresses, the kingpin an expansion from an earlier redoubt on the point commanding St. Anna Bay. This was the beginning of Fort Amsterdam, completed in 1648. Under the protection of its walls emerged a distinctly Dutch colonial imprint on the Spanish American landscape--the snug, steep-gabled, tile-covered houses of Willemstad (Hartog 1968, 71-72, 134-136; Goslinga 1985, 495-496).

The strategic value of Curaçao as a Dutch naval base was only surpassed by its commercial vantage as a slave depot after the Peace of Westphalia was declared in 1648.¹⁰¹ When Dampier and his cronies came hoping to unload a cargo of stolen sugar in 1681, the Dutch governor politely refused their entry. Unwilling to endanger profitable trade with the Spaniards by trucking openly with English buccaneers, he offered instead to deal surreptitiously by way of St. Thomas, where the Danish governor blatantly courted pirates and privateers. Dampier was prompted by this occasion to explain Curaçao's remarkable transformation from stronghold to slave mart:

[T]he *Dutch* have a very good Town, and a very strong Fort. Ships bound in thither must be sure to keep close to the Harbour's Mouth, and have a Hasar or Rope ready to send one end ashore to the Fort: for there is no Anchoring at the entrance of the Harbour, and the Current always sets to the Westward. But being got in, it is a very secure Port for Ships, either to careen, or lye safe... [Curaçao] is...esteemed...for its Situation for the Trade with the *Spaniard*. Formerly the Harbour was never without Ships from

Cartagene and Portabell, that did use to buy of the *Dutch* 1000 or 1500 Negroes at once, besides great quantities of *European Commodities*; but of late that Trade has fallen into the Hands of the *English* at *Jamaica*... (1927, 41).

In 1655, of course, the English had won in Jamaica the most formidable trophy yet collared by Spain's colonial rivals. Its powerful capital, like those of Curaçao and Saint-Domingue, spent its youth as a piratical *tour de force*.

Port Royal, Jamaica. "It is to the Bucaniers," wrote Edward Long in 1774, "that we owe the possession of Jamaica at this hour" (1970, 300). Buccaneers may or may not have assisted in the 1655 conquest of Jamaica by which Penn and Venables managed to salvage a shred of success from Oliver Cromwell's ambitious 'Western Design'.¹⁰² Certainly the nascent colony could not have survived thereafter without the military support of the buccaneers. Many of these--French, Dutch, as well as English--came from Tortuga; and some had learned their trade at Providence or Curaçao. Among the old guard were Blauvelt and Mansvelt, the latter destined to become the first admiral of Jamaica's privateers. Others were new recruits, ex-soldiers from the original British expeditionary force or militia picked up in the Lesser Antilles en route. The Welshman Henry Morgan, Mansvelt's eventual successor and Jamaica's pirate laureate, probably began his West Indian career among the latter group. Entire books have been devoted to Morgan and his pirate fiefdom at Port Royal; our scope regrettably permits only passing acquaintance with this notorious stronghold.

On the southern coast of Jamaica the deep and spacious harbor of Port Royal, now known as Kingston Harbour, was ideally suited (save for one grave geologic fault) to become a privateering and

commercial capital. Pirates, we recall, were no strangers to the place; Shirley and Jackson must have remarked upon its potential when they raided its shoreline in 1597 and 1643, respectively. Writing five years after its ultimate capture, Jamaica's future governor, Thomas Lynch, advised his English superiors of their recent boon:

In ye South is Port Cagway [later Port Royal] a harbour infinitely secure convenient & capacious, landlocked by a Point of Land that runs 12 myles SW from ye Maine of ye Island, having ye great River that comes by Los Angeles & St Jago running into itt, & many Springs about itt where Shippes doe commonly water, & conveniently wood, The Harbour is 34 or 5 Leagues crosse in one place, & every where good anchor ground, & soe deepe that a Ship of a thousand tun may lay her sydes to ye Shoare of the Poynt, & Load & unload with planks afloate (MS 1660, BL Harl. 3361, f.39).

When the English took possession of the harbor in 1655, two Spanish towns of inconsiderable size already occupied its north side, the Jamaican main. The larger Santiago de la Vega (already twice plundered by Shirley and Jackson) had been founded up the Rio Cobre and eventually assumed many of the English colony's administrative functions under the name of Spanish Town. Where the river emptied into the bay, the Spaniards had likewise established rudimentary port facilities in a place they called Caguaya (or Cagua). Here the English built Passage Fort and also maintained a small settlement. Enclosing the harbor to the south, the long sandspit known as the Palisadoes was what ultimately rendered these waters secure from enemies as well as the elements (see Map 13). The tip of this sandy protrusion was at that time detached, forming what the Spaniards had called the Cayo de Carena--or Careening Cay--and it was here that Penn and Venable's men constructed the initial fortress commanding

entrance to the harbor. These defense works, at first merely a round stone tower in the midst of a rectangular platform of mounted cannon, eventually transformed into the imposing Fort Charles. In the shadow of this bastion sprouted a bustling seaport. Cagway was the name adopted by its first inhabitants, an Angloized imitation of Cagua across the harbor channel. After the Restoration the thriving town assumed a new title, one which became synonymous with British power in the Caribbean and the depraved excesses of its buccaneer guardians. This was Port Royal (Pawson and Buisseret 1975, 1-8; MS Lynch 1660, BL Harl. 3361, ff.40-41; Cundall 1915, 45-47).

The grand fleet which had captured Jamaica was not long to protect it. By 1656 fewer than ten of the original thirty warships remained; the rest had already sprung leaks or returned to England. Edward D'Oyley, Jamaica's first governor, found no recourse but an unorthodox alliance with buccaneers for the protection of the colony. These ruffians of mixed nationality were already re-establishing their stronghold at Tortuga; but with the founding of Port Royal, D'Oyley could offer a superior natural harbor with growing defenses and repair facilities, all Jamaica's bounty for dependable victualling, readier access to the Spanish Main, English commissions, entertainment in port, and most importantly, a lucrative and steady market for plunder. He and the colony would in turn benefit from naval protection and, incidentally, a healthy cut from the spoils. It was a perfect arrangement, and Port Royal soon flourished thanks to the buccaneers. Christopher Myngs, commander of the remaining English navy, set an inspiring example with

successful raids against Campeche, Cumana, Puerto Caballos, and Santiago de Cuba. Spanish pieces of eight began flowing in the streets of Port Royal, and with the arrival of Governor Thomas Modyford in 1664, the buccaneers really came into their own. Morgan succeeded Mansvelt at the conn of an all-privateer fleet; their exploits, which we have already noted and will treat again in the following chapter, set new records of piracy in the Caribbean. Partly under Morgan's direction, the harbor's defense network gradually expanded until Port Royal was completely surrounded by forts, breastworks, and over one hundred guns. As a buccaneering stronghold, Port Royal reached its zenith with Morgan's sack of Panamá in 1671. After he donned the cloak of respectability, even rising to become Jamaica's knighted Lieutenant Governor in 1674, lesser sorties continued with Sir Henry's nod of approval. Under subsequent governorships in the 1680s, particularly that of Thomas Lynch, buccaneers found Port Royal's harbor no longer so welcoming--and Gallow's Point no longer an empty threat. Some went back to French masters at Petit-Goâve, some to the Carolinas, others to Campeachy and the Bay to out logwood. A few even followed the example of their ex-chieftan and sensibly retired (Pawson and Buisseret 1975, 20-39).

Certainly by 1680 Port Royal had, like Curaçao before it, diverted its energies from piracy to ultimately more profitable ventures in planting, slaving, and trade. Jamaica offered a fertile and expansive hinterland where sugar provided the new source of wealth. Port Royal continued to prosper as a seaport and naval base and, save for hulking stone-walled reminders of its militant

beginnings, probably appeared "very like an English shire town, perched on the end of a tropical spit" (Pawson and Buisseret 1975, 97). It is as such, not as the unbridled buccaneer lair of popular imagination, that we must envision it on a sultry June morning in 1692: massive Fort Charles and busy High Street; Fishers' Row and the King's House; The Sign of the Mermaid and The Sign of Bacchus; The Black Dogg and The Blue Anchor; Waterman's Wharf and Smith's Alley; St. Paul's Church and John Starr's brothel; the Jewish synagogue, Quaker meeting house, Catholic chapel; the prisons and the cemetery; 1500 homes crowded with 6500 people—all suddenly torn asunder by a violent earth tremor which plunged most of the town and a third of its populace to an early grave beneath the sea (Link 1960; Pawson and Buisseret 1975, 81-124 and App.12).

Today only fragments of Port Royal's past remain on dry land. Fort Charles stands rebuilt from its ruined walls, and marine archeologists have recovered intriguing mementos of the town's former prosperity. Onion-shaped flasks still dark with residual brandy, Chinese porcelain, brass slave collars, ornately carved clay pipes, pewter tankards, a gold pocket watch, turtle pens or 'crawles', a long-barreled musket, ships' caulking tools and, of course, Spanish pieces of eight—all evoke the spirit of a bygone age (Marx 1968 and 1973; Link 1960). It is, after all, in those days of "rum and roguery," when more upright citizens could complain of "a tavern to every ten residents," that one prefers to picture old Port Royal (Black 1970, 17-18). Perhaps then, we had better leave the once proud stronghold not at its nadir, half-swallowed by the

sea, but rather as the buccaneers' mecca which Exquemelin visited when piracy was near its riotous peak:

Captain Rock [Roche Brasiliano] sailed for Jamaica with [a Spanish] prize, and lorded it there with his mates until all was gone. For that is the way with these buccaneers-- whenever they have got hold of something, they don't keep it for long. They are busy dicing, whoring and drinking so long as they have anything to spend. Some of them will get through a good two or three thousand pieces of eight in a day--and next day not have a shirt to their back. I have seen a man in Jamaica give 500 pieces of eight to a whore, just to see her naked. Yes, and many other impieties.

My own master often used to buy a butt of wine and set it in the middle of the street with the barrel-head knocked in, and stand barring the way. Every passer-by had to drink with him, or he'd have shot them dead...(1972, 68).

So let us follow the unruly scions of these buccaneers back to where we began, to the Bahama Islands and the last of the pirate strongholds.

New Providence. It is perhaps fitting that the pirates' final strategic holdout in Spanish America should recall the name of one of their first. The island now called New Providence, situated in the middle of the Bahamas, was once named Fernandina in homage to Columbus' royal patron. Like Old Providence (Santa Catalina), the new version had colonial connections with the Bermudas, first settled by English adventurers in 1612.¹⁰³ It was not until 1666, however, that Captain William Sayle took refuge with some followers on the Bahamian island during a storm, initially bequeathing to it his own name. When similar circumstances delivered him there a second time, he thought better to acknowledge his good fortune, or rather his Creator's apparent benevolence, and renamed the island Providence. 'New' was later attached to distinguish the place from

its piratical forerunner (Oldmixon 1966, 11-12; Lucas 1905, 78; Burns 1954, 358).

These early years of New Providence were mostly a matter of colonial intrigue, nominally governed under the same proprietorship as the Carolinas and no doubt seasoned with a good measure of privateering against the Spaniards. After 1677, however, the indulgent policies of Governor Robert Clarke soon amplified the colonists' reputation for "living a lewd, licentious Sort of Life" (Oldmixon 1966, 12), and hastened their rapid degeneration, at least in Thomas Lynch's opinion, to a mere "nest of robbers" (in Burns 1954, 360). Some of the "robbers" were doubtlessly fugitives from that governor's rigid anti-piratical campaign on Jamaica. The Spaniards, in any event, did not remain tolerant for long and crushed the growing nuisance with a double punitive strike in 1684. Those who filtered back over the next several years established a decidedly piratical fraternity with little in the way of structured government. After Dutch/Anglo-French hostilities reached the Caribbean in 1691, their numbers were strengthened by English and possibly Dutch refugees from Petit-Goâve (Craton 1962-78-79; Burns 1954, 361-62, 397-99).

New Providence's career as a freebooter's stronghold really begins in 1695. John Oldmixon, who began recording the history of the island thirteen years later, described a rather symbolic architectural alteration by that date, one which combined with various natural assets made New Providence a distinctly attractive pirate port:

By this Time the Town of *Providence* was grown so considerable, that it was honoured with the Name of *Nassau*; and before Mr. *Trott's* Government expired there were 160 Houses...

The Harbour of *Nassau* is formed by *Hog-Island*, which belongs to Mr. *Trott*. It runs along parallel to it five Miles in Length, lying East and West. At the Entrance of the Harbour is a Bar, over which no Ship of 500 Ton can pass, but within the Bar, the Navy Royal of *England* might safely ride.

In the Town of *Nassau* there was a Church in Mr. *Trott's* Time, and he began a Fort in the Middle of it, which with his House made a Square. This Fort was mounted with 28 Guns and some Demi-Culvers.

There never was a Man of War at *Providence*, unless *Avery* the Pirate's Ship may be reckoned one, for it carried 46 Guns, and coming at a Time when the Inhabitants were in an ill State of Defence it was to no Purpose for them to stand out against him. But by the Character we have had of the People of *Providence*, we cannot think that Pirate, who was very rich, was unwelcome to them (1966, 18;).

When Henry Every reached *Nassau* with the *Fancy* in 1696, coffers brimming after a profitable cruise against the Great Mogul in the Indian Ocean, he in fact encountered little difficulty converting the town, its harbor, and its governor to suit his own needs (18-19; Lynam 1948, 244). Henceforth, save for a few setbacks from meddlesome English governors and vengeful Spaniards, New Providence continued to serve the Roundsmen and, later, those most notorious picaroons of the Golden Age--Vane, Rackham, England, Davis, 'Blackbeard' and their associates--till Woodes Rogers permanently cleared out their pirates' den in 1718. Most of the island's subsequent history indeed only vindicated the Bahamas' colonial motto: *EXPULSIS PIRATIS RESTITUTA COMMERCIA*.¹⁰⁴

The piratical fraternity of New Providence, like that of Madagascar, has often been painted (one might say with decidedly romantic license) as a near-utopian, ultra-democratic or anarchistic haven: a brutish yet noble 'Pirate Republic' (Woodbury 1951, 70-87;

Albury 1975, 60; Williams 1961, 150-51; Mitchell 1976, 84-85). There is an element of truth to this myth, but the reality of the pirates' settlement was probably closer to Woodbury's "marine hobo jungle...no city of homes...[rather] a place of temporary sojourn and refreshment for a literally floating population" (1951, 73). Another, more sordid reconstruction comes perhaps even closer to the mark:

Nassau was a shanty town of driftwood and palm fronds and old sails draped over spars to make tents. It was said that when the wind blew from the land you could smell New Providence before you sighted it. Every other hovel was a grog shop or a brothel with Negro and mulatto prostitutes. Favourite drinks were rumfustian (a mixture of beer, gin and sherry, heavily spiced)...and the general atmosphere resembled that of Hogarth's Gin Lane in a balmy climate, or of a resurrected and even sleazier Port Royal (Mitchell 1976, 84).

It might appear to be stretching a point to append New Providence to our list of pirate bastions. Certainly it was strategically located, perhaps better so than any of its predecessors for intercepting Europe-bound cargoes in the Florida Straits and Providence Channels. It also abounded with turtle, fish, wood, and fresh water. Its harbor was commodious and suitable for careening, large enough to hold five hundred sloops but too shallow to admit enemy warships of any great burden; moreover, the positioning of Hog Island provided two possible routes of escape. Recreational diversions, such as there were, probably suited the needs and tastes of Nassau's seafaring population well enough. New Providence, however, especially after degenerating into a freebooter's sanctuary without any colonial sanction or support, remained poorly fortified and devoid of a viable population. Two punitive forces, a joint

French-Spanish raid in 1703 followed by another Spanish strike in 1706, had little trouble demolishing Trott's pitiful church-fortress and depopulating the colony. When Woodes Rogers reached Nassau in 1718, its resident pirates had but a single nine pounder to defend the entire shore (Craton 1962, 93; Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 200; Woodbury 1951, 71-72). All that withstanding, the unquestionable impact of New Providence as a breeding lair and resort for nefarious pirates places it in the same category as the buccaneer strongholds, though not in the same league. In the next chapter we will scrutinize in historical and geographical detail the greatest island fortress of them all.

Notes

¹ In this study all distances are reckoned in statute miles unless otherwise specified.

² Explained here and displayed on Maps 2 and 3 as they had evolved by the close of the sixteenth century. Hoffman (1980) has recounted developments from 1535 which culminated in the full-fledged convoy network; some of these tactical responses are considered later in this chapter.

³ Such has been the terminology employed by various authors to differentiate the two treasure fleets bound either for Cartagena-Porto Bello or Vera Cruz. The former has been distinguished simply as the *galeones*, or galleons (Haring 1910, Goslinga 1971, Ashdown 1979); as the Panama Galleons (Lombardi and Lombardi 1983), or as the Tierra Firme fleet (Andrews 1967; Goslinga 1971). The term galleon specifically denotes a ship of the latter sixteenth century which replaced the clumsier carracks and caravels of earlier seaborne commerce (see Figure 1). Draft and the ability (or lack thereof) to 'point' were important aspects of ship design which affected the range and maneuverability of sailing vessels; such strategic consequences of Spanish naval architecture have been discussed by Hoffman (1980). The single term *flota* (Spanish for fleet) has often been used to specify the convoy bound for Vera Cruz (Haring 1910; Goslinga 1971; Ashdown 1979); it has been modified by various authors as Mexican Flota (Andrews 1967, Lombardi and Lombardi 1983), silver fleet, or plate fleet.

⁴ The term 'Spanish Main' (short for *mainland*) is sometimes used rather loosely to encompass virtually all Spanish possessions in the circum-Caribbean realm, including the sea itself. My own use of that term (or simply 'the Main'), in concurrence with Burns (1954), Ashdown (1979), and Hoffman (1980), describes only the north coast of South America, from the delta of the Río Orinoco to the Isthmus of Panama. *Tierra Firme* (or Terra Firma) has sometimes been used interchangeably with Spanish Main (Burns 1954, 723; Andrews 1967, 99) but more usually specifically refers to the isthmian province of Porto Bello and Panama (Hoffman 1980).

⁵ Haring mentioned the abandonment of Nombre de Dios by royal decree, on account of its poor harbor and unhealthy climate, in 1584 (1910, 17n). According to Loosley, however, the port was not moved from there to Porto Bello until 1597 (1933, 316).

⁶ The tempestuous seas off Cape Horn, though braved by many a daring pirate, proved so risky for regular colonial commerce that virtually all trade south of the Spanish Main flowed through Panama. True, the eastern, Argentine coast of Charcas faced the South Atlantic, but those waters remained so long under Portuguese control that despite

its eastern outlet this corner of the Spanish American empire shipped its products first to the Caribbean and thence to Spain (Jones 1963, 18).

⁷ From 1581 onwards, Havana remained the obligatory rendezvous for all ships returning to Spain (Hoffman 1980, 210).

⁸ The Treaty of Tordesillas (June 7, 1494) amended an earlier papal donation which divided the New World between Portugal and Spain. The original boundary, set the previous year at one hundred leagues west of the Cape Verdes and Azores, provoked serious objections on the part of the Portuguese, and the line was moved further west. The Pope's new partition decreed that a

straight line be determined and drawn north and south, from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole...at a distance of three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. And all lands, both islands and mainlands found and discovered already, or to be found and discovered hereafter, by the said King of Portugal and by his vessels on this side of the line and bound and determined above, toward the east, in either north or south latitude...shall belong to...the said King of Portugal and his successors. And all other lands, both islands and mainlands...which have been discovered or shall be discovered by the said King and Queen of Castile, Aragon, etc., and by their vessels on the western side of the said bound..., in either its north or south latitude, shall...remain in the possession of, and pertain forever to, the said King and Queen of Castile, Leon, etc., and to their successors (Williams 1963, 204-5).

⁹ Burns went on to explain that a similar "secret clause" characterized the Treaty of Vervins in 1598, and that the issue of peace in the Indies remained likewise avoided in the Treaty of London in 1604 (1954, 141n).

¹⁰ The date of Havana's first ransoming has been variously given as 1537 (Wright 1970, 216) and 1538 (Barbour 1911, 532).

¹¹ The triangular maritime zone connecting Spain with the Azores and the Canary Islands.

¹² Yaguana occupied the site of modern Port-au-Prince.

¹³ Not to be confused with the Isle of Pines just south of Cuba, also frequented by pirates. The archipelago in question, well east of Nombre de Dios, off the northern coast of Darien, served again as

the rendezvous and base for a cross-Panama expedition led by the buccaneers Sharp, Coxon, et al. in 1680.

¹⁴ Singular *cimarrón*. The adjectival form in Spanish generally conveys the same meaning as wild or feral. As a proper noun it described not only fugitive African slaves in Panama, but also those hiding out in Jamaica. The latter remained active even after the English conquest of that island in 1655. In English, the name was sometimes rendered Cimarron (see Williams 1975, 93) or Maroon (see Burns 1954, 153-54). A generic use of the latter eventually came to mean a person stranded (sometimes intentionally by pirates) on a remote shore.

¹⁵ Also spelled le Têtu. This French pirate is perhaps best remembered as one of the most accomplished hydrographers of the period. His cartographic contributions are discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁶ As Irene Wright aptly noted,

"the 'pirate's' real work was done by small light craft, equipped (in the case of the English, certainly) with oars as well as sails... [D]ocuments... furnish ample evidence that their speed, lesser size, and ability to row when the wind failed, completely discomfited... galleons, and even... frigates along the Main in 1569-71. The Spaniards were repeatedly out-sailed, out-rowed, and out-maneuvred (1932, xxx).

¹⁷ Drake's ship was originally named the *Pelican*.

¹⁸ In 1519, the Portuguese Magellan (or Magalhães) had sailed westward under Spanish patronage to reach Asia as Columbus had intended. Though killed in the Philippines, having once voyaged eastward to the Spice Islands (or Moluccas, in present-day Indonesia) on a previous expedition, he is considered the world's first circumnavigator. One of his ships, commanded by Juan Sebastian del Cano, indeed returned to Spain to complete the circuit in 1522 (James and Martin 1972, 75).

¹⁹ Oxenham was at this time awaiting his fate in Lima, as Drake was presently informed by some Spanish prisoners. Although he may have attempted to effect Oxenham's ransom, he apparently could do nothing to save him. Drake's appraisal of the recent events at Panamá, however, probably convinced him to forego raiding there (Andrews 1967, 74-75).

²⁰ Actually the Spanish sailors' disrespectful sobriquet for the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, a beautiful but cumbersome galleon

both in name and design. *Cacafuego* translates quite literally as 'Shit-fire'! (Hamshere 1972, 13).

²¹ After Drake's visit to the Isla del Caño in 1579, it served as refuge again for Cavendish in 1589; Sharp, Cox, and Ringrose in 1681; Dampier and Funnell in 1704; and doubtless many others (MS Cox 1682, NMM GOS/4, f. 44; Funnell 1729, 42-43; Ringrose 1987, 417-18). The small bay opposite, fed by the Río Sierpe and enclosed by the northwest point of the Peninsula de Osa (the Punta San Pedro--or Punta Mala on some older charts), where Drake careened, was likewise used by Cavendish. In Sharp's "South Sea Wagonner" (prepared by William Hack), the bay is depicted as "Candish^{es} Bay," where "M^r Thomas Candish [Cavendish] came through the Straight of Magellan & arrived here in the year 1589" (MS Hack 1684, BL Sloane 44, ff. 49-50). On a modern map of Costa Rica, however, it is called "Bahía Drake"; a small village there also bears the name of its first piratical visitor. The Isla del Caño is now a wildlife preserve (Costa Rica. Fundación de Parques Nacionales 1986).

²² With a small but fine natural harbor, Guatulco preceded Acapulco as the first Spanish port of any consequence on the Pacific coast of New Spain. Because an existing Indian trail connected Guatulco, via Oaxaca, to the Mexican capital, the Spaniards initially retained its site as the northern terminus for oceanic trade between New Spain and Peru. Guatulco flourished from about 1540 until Acapulco emerged as New Spain's principal Pacific outlet, thanks mostly to the Manila trade, by about 1574. By the time Drake (and afterwards Cavendish) sacked Guatulco, it had declined greatly in importance, though provincial trade with Peru and Central America continued (Gerhard 1960, 32-34).

²³ A ducat was worth five shillings six pence (Burns 1954, 159).

²⁴ The Earl of Cumberland, who, "[a]fter taking his degree at Cambridge...migrated to Oxford for the purpose of studying geography" (Gosse 1924, 95) embodied the combination of pirate-geographer discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁵ Trujillo was sacked three times between 1560 and 1576 and several times thereafter. Though the governor of Honduras mounted four cannon there in 1575 and later augmented defenses with a redoubt and seventeen additional guns, the harbor proved too spacious to protect affordably. The population quickly dwindled. Puerto Caballos, hit five times between 1589 and 1603, likewise suffered economic decline. After Phillip II ordered the Honduras ships not to break consort with the Mexican flota until sighting the western tip of Cuba, Santo Tomás de Castilla, nestled in the Bay of Amatique in the southwesternmost recess of the Gulf of Honduras, emerged as the first port of call (Floyd 1967, 14-15). By 1604 the Spaniards

abandoned Puerto Caballos altogether; its former site is now occupied by Puerto Cortez (Davidson 1974, 42; Jones 1940, 26).

²⁶ In Raleigh's day the name Guiana referred to a large portion of northeast South America, including the entire Orinoco River Basin (Burns 1954, 165).

²⁷ These included Robert Dudley, Amyas Preston, Laurence Keymis, and George Somers of Bermuda fame (Burns 1954, 166-69).

²⁸ The charts and journals of the seventeenth-century buccaneers are replete with aspirant references to the deeds of Drake and Cavendish. Basil Ringrose's account of his own voyage in 1680 to the Isla de la Plata, an islet off modern Ecuador which supposedly served as Drake's depot for dividing his South Sea spoils, fairly brimmed with hyperbolic envy:

This island received its name from Sir Francis Drake and his famous actions, for here it is reported by tradition that he made the dividend, or sharing, of that quantity of plate which he took in the *Armada* of this sea, distributing it to each man in his company by whole bowls full. The Spaniards affirm to this day that he took at that time twelve-score tons of plate and sixteen bowls of coined money a man, his number then being 45 men in all--insomuch that they were forced to heave much of it overboard, because his ship could not carry it all. Hence was this island called by the Spaniards themselves the Isle of Plate, from this great dividend; and by us Drake's Isle (1987, 352).

Sharp and Funnell likewise commemorated Cavendish's exploits (see note 21 above). One suspects from their comments that the buccaneers derived satisfaction whenever their voyages touched in the wake of the old sea dogs. The Spaniards certainly had cause to remember *El Draque* no less vividly. His death was celebrated in the epic poem *La Dragontea* by Lope de la Vega (Andrews 1967, 180).

²⁹ Here, to follow the sound geographic advice of Jackson's anonymous pirate-chronicler, to gain a better appreciation of the place, "it will not bee impertinent to take a small Survey of ye situation & structure of Mericao,"

which stands close by ye River Side, upon an uneven ground, riseing higher, to the North part, & declineing towards ye South, where stands a strong Forte, Composed of lime & Stone, in form of a halfe Moone, over against which ye Shippes hither resorting do useally cast Ankor. It consisteth of 500 houses, at ye least, most of which are built of Stone & Timber, & covered with tyle, & flat Roof'd after ye

Spanish Fashion. The rest are Thatched, consisting of thick mud walls, not any way inferior to ye other for strength. The Streetes are very uniforme, being built as a straight Line, tending to ye Markett place, where standeth their Cheife Church called Ecclesia Iemelior... It is likewise fortified towards the waterside, with Barracados of Earth & Stakes fastned to ye Ground with hide cast over them, & Gunns mounted to make good ye Landing Places, & is reputed ye Cheife Magazine for the receipt of all Spanish Comodities, from hence transported by ye River to ye remote Inland Townes & Villages...as, alsoe, for ye Comodities produced in these parts, which are shiped & Returned for Spaine. Wee found in ye Storehouses...some Sailes, Cables, & Ankors, for our Shiping, &, in that Seller where ye Sacke lay, according to ye notes given us by a Prisoner, wee digged up 1,100 peices of Eight (Harlow, ed. [Jackson] 1923, 11).

30 For the value of a Spanish piece of eight, i.e. eight reales (four to the pound sterling), see note 54 in Chapter 3.

31 About forty miles west of Cape Tiburon, Navassa is now a U.S. possession.

32 Most of the deserters were eventually delivered up by the Spaniards for prosecution by their own countrymen.

33 Haring (1910, 50) and Newton (1914, 316) both gave the figure of 7000 pieces of eight.

34 Before his celebrated voyage of 1628, Piet Heyn evidently considered an attack on the Honduras galleons a worthy alternative to capturing the Mexican *flota* (Goslinga, 1971, 180).

35 That indeed was the case. The Spaniards, alarmed by an attempt by English refugees from Providence Island to make a permanent base in the Bay Islands, had ousted not only them but, given the report of Jackson's men, their Indian hosts as well in 1642 (Newton 1914, 315). Upon Jackson's sacking of Trujillo, however, 120 of these Indians were allowed to return to Roatán and Guanaja (Harlow, ed. [Jackson] 1923, 25).

36 A Spanish account of Jackson's raid on Trujillo is to be found in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville (MS AGI Guatemala 44-July 1643 [dated 1644]).

37 Nearly fifty years before, from the same Isla Escudo, adverse weather and disease had forced a dying Francis Drake to abandon his last quest for plunder.

38 Rival nations certainly struggled for footholds in the Spanish domain during the sixteenth century, but to no avail. French Huguenots led by Jean Ribault and René de Laudonnière attempted two colonies, one short-lived experiment on the Carolina coast in 1562, and another two years later in Florida. The second colony, had it been successful, would have provided French corsairs immediate access to Havana, as well as the lucrative shipping concentrated in the Yucatán Channel and Straits of Florida. It was however, mercilessly destroyed by Admiral Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565 (Burns 1954, 150-51). The Spaniards themselves established San Agustín to secure the Florida coast. In 1585 Sir Richard Grenville tried in vain to plant a colony at Roanoke on the Virginia coast, still well within range of the Spanish treasure routes, but this too failed despite infusions from Drake and Raleigh. Sir Walter's visionary schemes for colonizing Guiana likewise proved illusory. As mentioned already, any intentions by Drake and Cumberland to hold Cartagena or San Juan de Puerto Rico as permanent bases dematerialized quickly in the face of disease and Spanish opposition.

39 Now called Camagüey.

40 The geographic content of these and other pirate journals is discussed in Chapter 4. The short manuscript account in the British Library, attributed to Coxon, was likely written by someone else.

41 Dampier later described their mode of construction:

The manner of making a Canoa is , after cutting down a large long Tree, and squaring the uppermost side, and then turning it upon the flat side, to shape the opposite side for the bottom. Then again they turn her, and dig the inside; boring also three holes in the bottom, one before, one in the middle, and one abaft, thereby to gage the thickness of the bottom; for otherwise we might cut the bottom thinner than is convenient. We left the bottom commonly about three Inches thick, and the sides two Inches thick below, and one and a half at the top. One or both ends we sharpen to a point (1927, 151).

42 A complete list of these accounts, both printed and manuscript, can be found in Lloyd (1956, 301). The events conveyed therein are critically compared and summarized in Kemp and Lloyd's admirable volume of 1960.

43 Assumedly the same young woman identified in Sharp's journal: "a Lady of about 18 years of age her name was Dona Iowna Constanta" (MS Sharp, BL Sloane 46.b., f. 94). Nothing is mentioned of her fate.

44 John Cox rendered a similar account, except he estimated only 670 pigs of silver (MS 1682, NMM Gos/4, f. 52). Based on William Dick's relation, if we assume that a full pig would have fetched three times £75, or £225, then all seven hundred of the crude silver bars would have been worth an astounding £157,500. In pieces of eight, based on a conversion rate of four to the pound (see note 54 in Chapter 3), the value of the silver would have equaled 630,000 Spanish pieces of eight. Such an amount would seem absurdly high, easily double Morgan's haul from the entire sacking of Panama itself; but even a fraction of that value, if the story is true, would suggest a magnificent buccaneering blunder.

45 Newton distinctly stated that prior to the 1683 attack ("a bolder enterprise than had ever yet been attempted by the buccaneers") Vera Cruz had remained the "unconquered port of Mexico" (1933, 325). Kemp and Lloyd mentioned that the city had been sacked twice previously, first in 1659 and again in 1678, but gave no further details or references (1960, 73).

46 A Dutch buccaneer, not to be confused with Jan Janszoon van Hoorn, an earlier Dutch commander who pillaged Trujillo and Campeche in 1633 (Goslinga 1971, 226-27).

47 Yanchey (sometimes spelled Yankey, Yankee, or Yankes) was the Dutch captain of a sixteen-gun prize. Christian, also Dutch, commanded a *patache* of forty guns ([Lynch] 1684, 115). Both had been operating off the north coast of Panama in 1681 when Dampier (who identified them as Yankes and Tristian) returned across the Isthmus from Sharp's South Sea expedition. They formed part of a larger pirate squadron which continued with Dampier to range along the Miskito Coast (Dampier 1927, 27-33).

48 This was apparently a common error at night which worked much to the advantage of the pirates. Just prior to Piet Heyn's famous coup off Matanzas, the Spaniards had not only failed to notice a Dutch spy ship among their own *flota*, but had even been led past the safety of Havana by unwittingly following the lights of the Dutch fleet! (Goslinga 1971, 186).

49 Or 'Forlorn Hope', as the English pirates usually referred to their exposed vanguard. Poignantly bleak in English, its derivation from the Dutch *verloren hoop* (or 'lost troop') and counterpart in French, *les enfants-perdus* ('lost babes'), evoke even more tragically the period's genre of warfare. This 'Forlorn' was lucky.

-
- 50 The offshore Castillo de San Juan de Ulúa.
- 51 Cochineal, a valuable red dye derived from a scale insect.
- 52 Like the Earl of Cumberland, Cowley held a Master of Arts degree at Cambridge (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 85). After leaving the coast of Central America, he proceeded to circumnavigate the world and later published his journal.
- 53 Nephew of another buccaneer named Peter Harris who was killed during Coxon's raid in the Bay of Panama (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 41 and 110. N.B. The authors incorrectly state that the elder Harris died while fighting under Morgan at Panama, though he may very well have taken part in that campaign).
- 54 Elevation 5839 feet.
- 55 i.e. Cartagena, Panamá, Porto Bello, Havana, Vera Cruz, and Acapulco.
- 56 According to Gerhard, "The value of the cargo usually varied from 200,000 to 1,000,000 pesos at Manila, worth two or three times that amount in New Spain and Peru. Contraband sometimes raised the final value to more than 10,000,000 pesos. The westbound cargo was almost exclusively silver" (1960, 38-39).
- 57 Apparently Granada's mayor had instituted a system of alarm bells, but the citizens grew tired of his drills and induced the governor in León to forbid any more bell ringing without his prior consent. His permission, needless to say, came too late in 1665 (Williams 1976, 50-51).
- 58 Cacao.
- 59 Raveneau de Lussan insisted, of course, that the buccaneers eschewed any violence toward Guayaquil's women: "when they came to know us...they felt very differently toward us, frequently giving indications of a passion bordering at times on folly" (1930, 211; cf. p. 217). One may reasonably suspect, however, that he was pluming his ego, assuaging his conscience, or concealing the true nature of his crimes. He did point out, believably enough, that the Spanish ladies held an initial terror for the buccaneers who, the padres had assured them, "were not formed like other mortals...and...ate women and little children" (1930, 211).
- 60 Except for a few straggling marauders who continued to pillage from the Tres Marias Islands of New Spain (Gerhard 1960, 188-94).

61 Burney gave the figures somewhat differently: "700 flibustiers, 170 soldiers from the garrison, and as many volunteer inhabitants and negroes as made up about 1200 men. The whole armament consisted of seven large ships and eleven frigates, besides store ships and smaller vessels; and, reckoning persons of all classes, 6000 men" (1891, 360).

62 Bocachica literally translates as 'small mouth'. A larger opening, the Bocagrande, lay to the north and was used by Drake in 1586. Since the 1640s, however, the Bocagrande had remained closed by a sandbar (McDowell 1989, 502).

63 Under the terms of this expedition, free Negroes were to receive the same shares as other men. The masters of killed slaves were to be reimbursed for their losses (Burney 1891, 358).

64 Historian Burney considered the Davis expedition to be the endpoint of the buccaneers' era (1891, 379). Though not a very momentous undertaking, it did bear their distinctive piratical trademark.

65 Enemy to all mankind.

66 The Jolly Roger, a black jack emblazoned with a white skull and/or various other reminders of mortality, was in fact widely used aboard pirate vessels of the early eighteenth century. Though primarily a device for striking fear into the hearts of victims, the pirate flag symbolized as well the fugacity of the profession and a sort of social statement, reminiscent of the buccaneers' *coutume de la côte*, which distinguished the freebooters from mainstream colonial society (Rediker 1987, 279-80; 1988, 165). The first pirate known to have raised the Jolly Roger was a Frenchman, Emanuel Wynne, who engaged a British man-of-war under its grisly charge off Jamaica in 1700. His banner consisted of "a sable ensign with cross-bones, a death's head and an hour-glass" (Mitchell 1976, 82), but several variations were adopted by later pirates. 'Calico Jack' Rackham sported a skull atop crossed sabres. Other captains, including Queloh, Spriggs, and Teach (alias Blackbeard) are said to have used a skeleton clutching an hour glass in one hand and a dart poised above a victim's bleeding heart in the other (Carr 1943, 132-33; Botting 1978, 48-49; Mitchell 1976, 82). Bartholomew Roberts employed two flags; one depicted himself, outlass in hand, feet balanced upon the skulls of a Barbadian and a Martinican (Pringle 1953, 112; Botting 1978, 49). Apparently the black jack signified an offer of quarter to a vessel under attack, while a red or 'bloody' banner informed its hapless crew that none could be expected. The origin of the term Jolly Roger is not clear. It may have derived from *joli rouge* (or 'pretty red', as the French

flibustiers might have called the red standard), or it may have alluded to the flag used by the Tamil pirate Ali Raja. Quite possibly, especially given the flag's motif and the pirates' rejection of prevailing social mores, it alluded to Old Roger, an eighteenth-century sobriquet for Satan (Mitchell 1976, 82). An ancient symbol for mortality, the skull and crossbones, occasionally depicted with an hour glass, had long been used in captains' logs to mark the deaths of sailors. Freebooters most likely adopted this customary graphic as their professional trademark and augmented it with weapons and bleeding hearts to create "a triad of interlocking symbols--death, violence, limited time...[which] eloquently bespoke the pirates' own consciousness of themselves" (Rediker 1987, 279). In his article, "Pirate Flags," H.G. Carr mentioned that certain British submarines flew the Jolly Roger during World War II, an interesting observation given the parallels already noted between submarine and piratical warfare (1943, 134). The resurgence of such necro-symbolology in our own time makes one wonder if the modern pirate has not exchanged the swift brigantine for a powerful Harley-Davidson.

67 1716 to 1726 are the inclusive dates used by Marcus Rediker to bracket his excellent study of this distinctive pirate era (1987 and 1988). Lloyd, in his introduction to Captain Johnson's *Lives of the Most Notorious Pirates*, stated that "the decade following the War of the Spanish Succession [i.e. after 1714] saw the golden age of piracy" (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 9).

68 See note 79 below.

69 Estimates of New Providence's pirate constituency during these years vary among historians. Karraker conjectured "a gathering of more than a thousand pirates" (1953, 176), while Williams claimed that "this 'Pirate Republic' boasted a population of some 2,000 desperate men" (1961, 150). Woodbury went so far as to suggest that the "roster of those who frequented New Providence at this time is the roster of piracy from 1716-1718" (1951, 81). A document submitted to the British Board of Trade in 1717 stated that the combined crews of just five pirate captains there included 360 men (Craton 1962, 98), but the total pirate population must have been considerably larger. Based on the listing of about twenty New Providence captains by 'Johnson', Albury estimated with the assumption of seventy crewmen per commander that the combined number must have approached 1400 (1975, 65-67).

70 Lynam asserted that "the Island of the Holy Redeemer [San Salvador] was renamed...in memory of George Watling, a noted buccaneer who had his temporary headquarters there" (1948, 244). Gosse previously had speculated that it was Captain John Watling, one of the leaders in Sharp's South Sea venture, who left his name

to island (1924, 313). The latter was killed in a retreat from Arica, on the Peruvian coast, in 1681. I have been unable to determine if John and George Watling were in fact the same person.

Watling Island, renamed San Salvador in 1926 because it was believed to have been thus christened during the 1492 voyage, may not have been the first landfall of Columbus afterall. A recent attempt by National Geographic's Joseph Judge to reenact the famous discovery suggests that Columbus' San Salvador may actually be Samana Cay, about 60 nautical miles southeast of Watling Island (Judge 1986, 566-77).

71 Now called the Isla de Juventud, or Isle of Youth.

72 Winzerling claimed that the buccaneer John Coxon settled on the south side of Roatán at a small harbor now known as Coxon-Hole (1946, 70). Davidson later pointed out, however, that no such place appeared on any map until 1843 (1974, 53). A draught compiled by Lieutenant Barnsely in 1742(a) shows a "Caulkett's Hole" on the southwest coast of Roatán and a "Cockman's Creek" running to the mid-southern coast. As Davidson suggested, Coxon Hole may have derived from an earlier name such as one of these. Another "Map of the Island of Ratan" (1742b), anonymous but likely the work of Barnsley, includes these same names in addition to a "Pyrats Cove" at the island's western tip. In any event, Davidson could uncover no evidence of extended habitation by Coxon or any other pirates; in fact, he contended, "The major significance of the buccaneers to the islands' landscape history from 1650 to 1741 was the prevention of permanent settlement" (1974, 53--emphasis added).

73 The cartographic history of the Falkland Islands is quite interesting and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

74 Cony or coney strictly refers to the European rabbit. No true member of the species was native to South America, but the buccaneers applied the name 'Indian Coney' to describe the rodent *Dasyprocta agouti* (Joyce ed. [Wafer] 1934, 65, 65n).

75 Sea snails.

76 See note 28 above.

77 The buccaneers apparently declined to eat seal or sea-lion meat except as a last resort, though they did make use of the fat for cooking. Dampier mentioned that during Sharp's visit to Juan Fernández, the men had also fashioned dice from a sea lion's teeth (1927, 70). On a later voyage, William Funnell described the buccaneers' wantonly cruel treatment of these unlucky beasts:

...when we wanted to kill one to make Oil, we used commonly to clap a Pistol just to his Mouth, as it stood open, and fire it down his Throat; but if we had a mind to have some Sport with him, which we called Lion-baiting; usually six, seven or eight, or more of us, would go with each a Half Pike in his Hand, and so prick him to death; which commonly would be a Sport for 2 or 3 Hours before we could conquer him (1729, 15-16).

78 Evidently the Spaniards' ploy had little effect. When Funnell arrived with Dampier in 1704, he found not wild dogs, but rather *cats*. The goats apparently remained as plentiful as ever (Funnell 1729, 13).

79 Selkirk, perhaps via Robinson Crusoe, no doubt provided further inspiration for Stevenson's marooned character, Ben Gunn, in *Treasure Island*. John Moore, whose 1939 article first suggested that Defoe was the true author of Captain Johnson's *Lives of the Most Notorious Pirates*, pursued this interesting literary relationship further in "Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates" (1943).

80 Rival French privateers had chased away Dampier and Stradling in 1704, and Funnell (aboard Dampier's *St. George*) recounted how in previous years French buccaneers had likewise based themselves at Juan Fernández:

I have heard Captain *Martin* tell of some *French* Pirates who were in these Seas, that having been sometime cruizing up and down, and not meeting with a sufficient Booty, and being every where discovered by the *Spaniards*, ...concluded to come to the Island of *Juan Fernando's*. they being 20 in number and there to lie 9 or 10 Months; which accordingly they did, and landed on the West-side of the Island, then drew their little Armadilla ashore, and in a small time brought the Goats to be so tame...that...many of them come of themselves to be milked; of which Milk they made good Butter and Cheese, not only just to supply their Wants whilst they were upon the Island, but also to serve them long after; and that...they launched their little Man of War, went upon the coast of *Peru*, and off the Bay of *Arica* met with a *Spanish* Ship and took her, in which was said to be two hundred thousand Pieces of Eight with about the value of half as much more in Gold double Doubloons (1729, 14).

81 Commodore George Anson, who captured a rich Manila galleon in 1743, refreshed en route at Juan Fernández (Lyon 1990, 25).

82 All of the maroonings on Juan Fernández appear to have been either voluntary or accidental; elsewhere, however, such was not

always the case. Prisoners, when not killed outright, posed real difficulties for their pirate captors. Kept aboard, they consumed already-scarce rations of food and water. Given boats, or landed within easy reach of civilization, they were sure to alarm the authorities and spoil the advantage of surprise. Moreover, in sufficient numbers they constituted a potential threat to the safety of crew and ship. The best solution, for those pirate leaders who retained a modicum of social conscience, was to maroon the unfortunates someplace where they could cause no mischief. As often as not the desolate spot offered little hope for timely rescue or prolonged sustenance. John Cockburn, captured off Jamaica by a one-handed freebooter named Henry Johnson, barely lived to relate his ordeal of being stranded, stark naked, on a barren isle in the Gulf of Honduras:

After we had been upon this island two hours, where we could perceive no possibility of subsistence, and inwardly lamenting our hard fate, ...we saw the boat making towards us which had brought us thither; the sight of which raised different conjectures in our minds, supposing they had either relented, and were sending to fetch us back to the ship, or else that they had resolved to dispatch us immediately on the spot; but upon their approach we found ourselves both ways mistaken, for, presenting a naked man to us, whom they had brought under a strong guard, they told us, their business was only to add one more to our number, and then throwing us some small pieces of beef, and some biscuits, in a disdainful manner, which they said was more than we deserved, they put off again (1817, 6-7).

The new arrival, as it turned out, was Johnson's gunner, banished by his superiors for contesting the division of spoil. Pirates, in fact, never hesitated to maroon their own in punishment, as evidenced by the articles of the *Revenge*, John Philips commander:

If any man shall offer to run away, or keep any secret from the company, he shall be marooned with one bottle of powder, one bottle of water, one small arm and shot.

If any man shall steal any thing in the company, or game, to the value of a piece of eight, he shall be marroon'd or shot.

If at any time we should meet another Marrooner (that is pirate) that man shall sign his articles without the consent of our company, shall suffer such punishment as the captain and company shall think fit (in Williams 1961, 151).

⁸³ The Islas Juan Fernández are a perfect example. Even into the present century, "one of the principal exports of the Juan Fernández group was hummingbirds, hideously stuffed and mounted" (MacLiesh and Krieger, 1962, 120). Today the islands are home to a new breed of marooners--political prisoners from Chile.

⁸⁴ Especially the one-to-two foot long remora, family *Echeneididae*.

⁸⁵ In addition, the Miskito Indians invented the ingenious method of catching sea turtles with live remora, or suckfish, tied to a line. The remora would attach themselves to a turtle's belly just as they would to the bottom of a ship (Woodbury 1951, 107).

⁸⁶ A Spanish *cedula* of 1672 authorized colonial governors to prosecute all unlicensed logwood traders as pirates (Wilson 1936, 4). For an example of ill treatment given such interlopers, see Jonas Clough's account of his capture by Spaniards in 1679 (in Thornton 1953, 31-38).

⁸⁷ Though not quite worth its weight in gold, logwood was nevertheless compact, durable and "in the economic life of the Caribbean area comparable to...a circulating medium of exchange." Spanish authorities rummaging for proof of illicit trade aboard British merchantmen searched for two items: logwood and pieces of eight (Wilson 1936, 8).

⁸⁸ Strictly speaking, the aboriginal composition of Mosquitia ranged from the Sumus of Cape Gracias a Dios in the north to the Rama near Bluefields in the south. With the admixture of European and Negro blood after the 1630s, the Sumus surrounding the buccaneer settlement at Cape Gracias became known as Sambo-Miskitos (Floyd 1967, 19-22). Among Englishmen, however, the entire Indian population of this coast was and is commonly referred to as Miskito, Moskito, or Mosquito.

⁸⁹ The coast appears to have taken its name from the interior Cockscomb (now Maya) Mountains, quite visible from the sea. That toponym describes perfectly well, however, the jagged shoreline of the eastern Yucatán, which is typical of a pirate coast.

⁹⁰ Bluefields (or Blauvelt) led a varied and interesting career, the known details of which appear in Chapter 3.

⁹¹ Although limited stands of logwood were formerly harvested in Mosquitia, mahogany emerged as the primary lumber export there and along the Cockscomb Coast (West and Augelli 1976, 294). Parsons categorically asserted that "On the Miskito Shore there was no logwood" (1954, 8), but Joseph maintained that "by 1675...English

buccaneers were taking up positions and felling trees...along the Mosquito coast, past Cape Gracias a Dios, as far down as <<Bluefields>>" (1974, 24).

⁹² After Piet Heyn, Jol was probably the most feared of the Dutch privateers operating in Spanish America. Because of his wooden leg the Spaniards knew him as *Pie de Palo*, not to be confused with the earlier French corsair, François le Clerc, who bore the same handicap and colorful sobriquet. For the details of Jol's dynamic career, see Goslinga's chapter (1971, 229-57).

⁹³ Winzerling devoted a chapter to this effect (1946), and his assertions were more or less echoed by Caiger (1951), Parsons (1964) and West and Augelli (1976, 293). Dobson, however, cautioned that such claims could not be substantiated from the records of the Providence Island Company (1973, 48-49).

⁹⁴ Dobson amply illustrated, after the work of a Spanish historian, how the name Wallace or Willis might easily have been corrupted into the present Belize. He was also careful to point out that 'Belize' might just as easily have derived from any of three Maya words: *belakin*--land towards the sea; *balitza*--land of the Itzá; or *beliz*--muddy waters (1973, 50-52).

⁹⁵ Though not a crucial entrepôt the magnitude of Veracruz, la Villa de San Francisco de Campeche posed the sole remaining target worth hitting on the Gulf coast. Corsair and buccaneer assaults there were frequent and merciless. The first sacking took place in 1597 at the hands of William Parker. Later pirate attacks occurred under Cornelius Jol, Jan van Hoorn, Bartolomé Portugués, Roche Brasiliano, Lewis Scott, L'Olonnais, Laurens de Graff, and the Sieur de Grammont. Though fortifications for the harbor's defense were initiated in the early seventeenth century, these were not completed until 1704, by which time the dispersal of the buccaneers had rendered them a costly obsolescence (Von Winning 1950).

⁹⁶ Even well into the seventeenth century such was not always the case. Dampier told of buccaneers who remained completely unaware of logwood's value. One such captain wasted much of his prize's cargo as firewood before he learned of its true worth (Dampier 1729, Vol.II, 47). Rayner Thrower's suggestion that logwood prizes tended to be discarded, however, is highly unlikely (see Thrower 1980, 69).

⁹⁷ Though sometimes spelled *Triste*, French for 'sad', the island most likely derived its name from *tryst*, or place of appointment. Today the entire barrier island is known as the Isla del Carmen. In Dampier's day it was the main anchorage for large ships; vessels of lesser draft could proceed through the bayous to One-Bush Key (1729, Vol.II, 17).

⁹⁸ Parsons noted this canal may have been the work of buccaneers, or it may have been constructed by the Spaniards after the 1641 takeover (1964, 24). The rocky islet thus created became known as Santa Catalina, the former Spanish designation for all of Providencia.

⁹⁹ This is sheer speculation on my part. My basis for this theory and the known details of Mansvelts's career are treated further in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ The Curaçao expedition was led by Joannes van Walbeeck and Pierre le Grand. I have found no correspondence, other than name, between this Pierre le Grand and the one of Dieppe, renowned as the first successful buccaneer of Tortuga (see Chapter 3).

¹⁰¹ The peace which ended the Thirty Years War and by which Spain finally recognized Dutch independence in the United Provinces.

¹⁰² Burney claimed, "In the conquest of Jamaica, the English were greatly assisted by the buccaneers" (1891, 62). Penn and Venables did pick up recruits from English-occupied Barbados, Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts, but the former occupations of these men remain unknown.

¹⁰³ Captain Nathaniel Butler had governed Bermuda from 1619 to 1622 before assuming the equivalent office on Old Providence in 1638. The first settler of New Providence, Captain William Sayle, had likewise held the governorship of Bermuda, intermittently, from 1641 to 1662 (Lefroy 1981, xxxv-xxxvi). Sayle eventually became Governor of the Carolinas. Bermuda thus played a pivotal role in the early colonization efforts of the Providence Island Company and English settlement throughout the Americas. It also functioned prominently as a pirate stronghold, with great impact on piracy both in Anglo- and Spanish America. Regionally, the Bermudas lie beyond the geographical scope of our present study, but interested readers may refer to Wilkinson (1950) for his well-documented chapter on Bermudan piracy and privateering from 1689-1721.

¹⁰⁴ Pirates Expelled Commerce Restored.

THE PIRATES' WAKE
A GEOGRAPHY OF PIRACY
AND PIRATES AS GEOGRAPHERS
IN
COLONIAL SPANISH AMERICA

1536-1718

VOLUME II

A Dissertation

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in

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by
Peter R. Galvin
B.S., Purdue University, 1980
M.A., University of Washington, 1985
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Chapter 3

THE ACHILLES HEEL

**Antes de La Tortuga
no existieron, no pudieron existir,
ni el bucanerismo ni el filibusterismo**

**--Manuel Arturo Peña Battle
La Isla de la Tortuga (1951)**

Tortuga:

Una Isla Utilísima

Of all the pirates' strongholds in Spanish America, if any qualified as their "acropolis"¹ it was the island-fortress of Tortuga, off the northern shore of Hispaniola. No other lair surpassed its combined qualities of rugged inaccessibility, lofty defenses, and isolation while offering safe harbor, fresh water, timber, hunting, and strategic command over important trade routes. No buccaneer base survived with its tenacity; and no rovers' den, save maybe Port Royal, loomed as large in pirate lore for adventure, treachery, and excess. True, its Jamaican counterpart, perhaps owing to Port Royal's cataclysmic destruction by tremors so violent as to suggest Divine retribution, usurped for posterity much of the infamy which rightfully belonged to Tortuga. This small island was the nursery of buccaneers long before Jamaica was ever wrested from the Spaniards, and it prospered as their headquarters for years after Port Royal officially closed its gates to piracy.

According to the Spanish scholar Peña Battle, the piratical network engendered by the buccaneers could never have evolved without Tortuga (1951, 123).² That assessment may have been phrased too strongly, for the Spanish American bonanza was ripe for systematic plundering. Had Tortuga not emerged as the first pirate headquarters in the New World, some other rugged island surely would have. To say, however, that Tortuga facilitated the rise of the buccaneers, initially as an entrepôt for the hunters from Hispaniola, and thereafter as a fortified retreat when they turned

pirate, is entirely correct. Moreover, during its piratical career, the island assumed center stage, both historically and geographically, of piracy in Spanish America. It is therefore quite fitting, as a microcosmic application of our larger study, to examine Tortuga in detail as an archetypal pirate stronghold, both in its historical role as the nest of the buccaneers and as a geographical consequence of its physical attributes and strategic situation.

Early History as a Pirate Base

Christopher Columbus visited the island during the famous voyage of discovery. Here, it is known from a contemporary manuscript source, Columbus bestowed upon the island its present name,³ the Spanish for turtle, to commemorate catching a giant sea turtle there in 1492 (Parsons 1962, 37). The Spaniards made little effort to colonize the island. Perhaps its diminutive size, like so many of the Lesser Antilles, they considered unworthy of consuming scarce manpower when larger, more tantalizing pearls still beckoned. But, as historian Peña Battle pointed out,⁴ it was their inattention to such "*Islas inutiles*" which ultimately corroded their American empire (1951, 107). In the century or so after Columbus' discovery, the Spaniards succeeded in introducing hogs and cattle to Tortuga and the northwest reaches of neighboring Hispaniola, but Spanish settlements failed to take root there.⁵ By the beginning of the seventeenth century, these abandoned shores,

teeming with feral pigs and cattle, attracted the first interlopers to molest the Spaniards from a foothold in their own domain, as co-occupants of the New World. The early history of Tortuga as a buccaneer base is closely tied to that of other islands, namely: Hispaniola, the Antillean giant just to the south; St. Christopher and Nevis, in the Leeward Islands to the east; and Providence Island, well to the southwest, off the Miskito Shore. How elements from these diverse locales converged upon tiny Tortuga, striking out again to help dismantle Spain's hegemony in the Caribbean, provides a fascinating episode in the region's history.

By 1620 a remarkable blend of human flotsam had accumulated along the northern and western shores of Hispaniola. Dutch traders had become accustomed to exploiting the salt-pans at Cape St. Nicolas. French sailors had begun calling at the natural harbor afforded by the island of Gonave, and English mariners had likewise come to frequent Samana. Stragglers from all three nations--stranded, marooned, or shipwrecked crewmen; deserters; runaway bond servants and slaves; adventurers of all sorts--had collected on those coasts since their abandonment by the Spaniards (Newton 1933, 168-71). There they coexisted more-or-less peacefully, wresting a savage subsistence from the land, mostly as hunters of the wild swine and cattle introduced by Spanish settlers long before. These former sailors must have found little difficulty crossing the five-mile-wide channel between Hispaniola and Tortuga, for their hunting operations extended to the smaller island. Its southern coast they probably settled initially as a trading post where they exchanged hides, tallow, and cured meat for powder, shot, brandy, and other

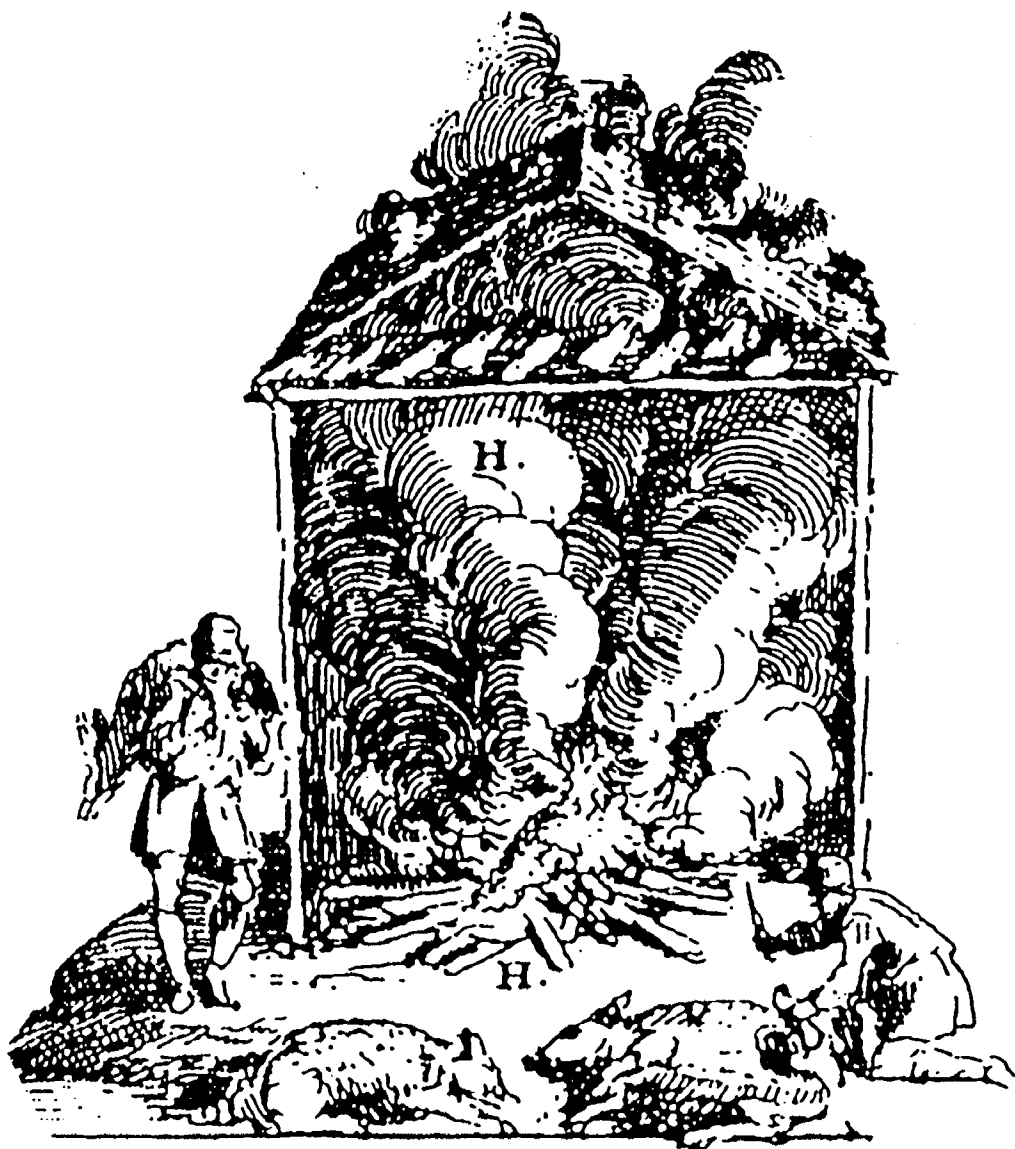
manufactured essentials supplied by passing interlopers, mostly Dutch (Newton 1933, 160-70; Haring 1910, 57-58).

We can picture the lifestyle of these earliest European hunters from descriptions of their heirs penned but a few decades later. According to French Jesuit chroniclers,⁶ who worked among them from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, they eschewed permanent habitation, preferring to rendezvous wherever cattle and hogs were plentiful and to camp under the open sky. What rude, temporary structures they did erect were of Indian design, mere pole-frame sheds covered with leaves or skins (called *ajoupas* after the Indian term),⁷ which they used to protect hides and preserved meat from the rain until these could be bartered away to passing ships.

Their garb consisted of little more than a coarse-cloth shirt and pair of drawers, belted with a broad strip of undressed cowhide which secured three or four large knives and a pouch containing powder and shot. Often round the waist they also fastened a cloth sack in which to sleep at night for protection against biting insects. For a boot they simply allowed untreated skin from a cow or hog's leg to shrink to size round the foot, then bound it with sinews or strips of leather. A peaked hat with a short, pointed brim topped off this grotesque outfit, the whole attire typically smeared black with old blood and grease from butchering. Completing this ensemble was their most important accessory, a long-barreled musket, the best of which were imported from Bordeaux or Nantes (Newton 1933, 170; Labat 1970, 175-76; Haring 1910, 68; Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 5; Besson 1929, 7-8).



Figure 8: A *Boucanier*--Huntsman Progenitor of the Buccaneer
(Engraving first published in the 1686 French edition of Exquemelin)



**Figure 9: A *Boucan*, or Indian Smokehouse
Adopted by the *Boucaniers***

(Early eighteenth-century engraving, reprinted in Mitchell 1976)

These were the men who first came to be known as *boucaniers* (see Figure 8), and they owed their name and their lore to the Indians who preceded them. Most of the Indians who had inhabited Hispaniola⁸ were quickly exterminated by the Spaniards. From Alexandre Exquemelin, the pirate-surgeon who published a journal of his sojourn among the buccaneers from 1669 to 1674, we learn that along with the feral cattle, pigs, and horses which had overrun the island, there were also numerous wild dogs. These, he claimed, were descended from hounds imported by the Spaniards to track down rebellious Indians (1972, 40). He added that

Since that time, the Indians have been so terrified they dare not show themselves, and most of them have perished of hunger, having hidden themselves among the rocks out of fear. I myself have seen caves in the mountains full of human bones, which I would guess to be the bones of more than a hundred people; I have come across many such caves when hunting (1972, 40).

But one enduring Indian legacy which the European hunters adopted was the art of the *boucan*,⁹ a wooden grill set in a small green-thatched hut, used for slowly smoking and drying meat (see Figure 9). One of the best descriptions of the technique comes from the charming narrative of the Jesuit missionary, Père Labat. On a voyage to Hispaniola in 1701 his ship stopped on the west coast to barter with a company of hunters and exchanged, as in olden days, powder, shot, cloth, and brandy for smoked meat and lard.

We arrived rather late at the hunter's *boucan*. They had plenty of meat dried or being dried, and two or three pigs which they had killed that day, so we made a very hearty supper.

The meat is cured as follows. As soon as a pig is killed, it is cleaned and the meat cut into as long strips as possible. These strips, which are about one and a half inches thick, are then powdered with salt,¹⁰ and left for

twenty-four hours. After this the salt is brushed off, and the strips are laid flat on shelves made of lathes in the *boucan*. This *boucan* is a little dome-shaped hut, or ajoupa made of leaves. A fire is lighted on the floor of the *boucan*, on which is thrown the skin and bones of the animal. These make a thick pungent smoke that penetrates the meat, which eventually becomes so dry that it is as hard as a board.¹¹

The strips are then taken out and tied up in bundles of 100 pounds each. In former days a bundle was worth three pieces of eight... (1970, 176-77).

Apparently the technique was not much changed from the time of Exquemelin,¹² who in addition mentioned that the hunters would accumulate twenty or thirty hundred-weight of dried meat before hauling it off to trade, and that a pound of *boucanned* meat could fetch two pounds of tobacco (1970, 49).

The islands must indeed have fairly abounded with feral game which the *boucaniers* slaughtered in great quantities (41). Apparently the hunters specialized, tracking down either bulls for hides or hogs for meat. After spending a year or more hunting in the forests of Hispaniola, they would repair to Tortuga, which by Exquemelin's time was a fully established port town--with all the usual accoutrements:

When they arrive, they squander in a month all the money which has taken them a year or eighteen months to earn. They drink brandy like water, and will buy a whole cask of wine, broach it, and drink until there's not a drop left. Day and night they roam the town, keeping the feast of Bacchus so long as they can get drink for the money. The service of Venus¹³ is not forgotten, either. In fact, the tavern-keepers and whores make ready for the coming of the hunters ...in the same way as their fellows in Amsterdam prepare for the arrival of the East India ships... Once their money is all spent and they've had all they can on credit, back they go to the woods again, where they remain for another year or eighteen months (45).

How long these hunting progenitors of the piratical buccaneers, if unprovoked, would have remained peaceful toward their

Spanish 'hosts' is impossible to say; but in time the convergence of various events urged them to turn their sights upon members of their own species. Above all was the threat to their livelihood imposed by dwindling herds of wild swine and cattle. Their own hunting strategy was hardly conservatory; Exquemelin claimed that a single hunting party would sometimes shoot a hundred pigs in one morning, "only to take seven or eight of them, because in general they prefer to have sows" (49). He estimated that over the course of eighty-one years, 1500 swine had been killed every day. Moreover, the hunters had to compete with the packs of wild dogs which also roamed the island, devouring calves and piglets, and occasionally bringing down even large animals. Finally, the Spaniards, in an effort to stamp out a growing foreign presence which centered on the hunting trade, sought first to destroy their mainstay (39-41). Nor did they confine their lances to the wild herds, but turned upon the perceived poachers as well.¹⁴

By around 1630, Tortuga seems to have become an established trading settlement not only for the hunters, but also for planters,¹⁵ and, in increasing numbers, freebooters (*flibustiers*). The last of these, mostly English, enlarged their ranks with recruits from the *boucanier*-hunters, mostly French. Thus by this stage their names¹⁶ and occupations had begun to overlap, and the buccaneer, to quote Haring, "combined in himself the occupations of cow-killing and cruising, varying the monotony of one by occasionally trying his hand at the other. In either case he lived at constant enmity with the Spaniards" (1910, 67). Late in 1630 or early in 1631,¹⁷ a Spanish force from Santo Domingo occupied the

fledgling settlement at Tortuga and installed a small garrison manned with about 25 soldiers. Soon afterwards, however, in the face of opposition those unfortunates gladly dispossessed themselves of the isolated post (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 10; Haring 1910, 58). It is from about this time that the tiny entrepôt rebounded, with infusions from St. Christopher and Providence Island--but not without further resistance from the Spaniards--to become a pirate stronghold.¹⁸

While the buccaneers were establishing themselves on Hispaniola and Tortuga, the governments of France, England, and the Netherlands were scrambling for official colonial footholds elsewhere in the Caribbean. The first English colony was St. Kitts (St. Christopher), settled in 1623 and partitioned two years later to accommodate the first regular French colonists. Barbados received its first English settlers in 1627, and both the Dutch and English ingressed jointly upon Santa Cruz (St. Croix) by 1625. Within three years English colonists from St. Kitts spread out to Nevis and Barbuda and by 1632 reached Antigua and Montserrat, while in that same year the French occupied Dominica, and the Dutch took St. Eustatius (Lucas 1905, 47-51; Harlow, ed. 1923, xiii n). The nature of these colonies was fundamentally different from the little hornet's nest growing up unchecked on Tortuga. Sanctioned by their respective crowns, they served defined national and corporate ends, and their inhabitants were primarily interested in planting and trade. Tobacco provided the first cash crop, later supplanted by sugar.

The Spaniards, in any event, must have regarded the rapidity and implied permanency of these incremental incursions with rage and anxiety. In 1629, under orders to protect the annual fleet between Cartagena and Vera Cruz, a formidable armada sailed from Spain under the command of Don Federico de Toledo. He was ordered, as an ancillary maneuver on the outward voyage, to clear out the French and English squatters on St. Kitts and Nevis. With thirty-five galleons he easily subdued the new colonies, making prisoners of the settlers, destroying their crops, and burning their houses. Most of the French and about 300 of the English escaped to the interior or nearby islands, but nearly 700 English captives, though graciously spared,¹⁹ were compelled to return to England (Newton 1933, 160). Most of those who had fled returned in short order to renew their pursuits on St. Kitts and Nevis, but a sizeable contingent of the escapees, presumably both French and English, made their way to Tortuga to join the buccaneers. These were later augmented by Dutch refugees, similarly ousted from Santa Cruz (Lucas 1905, 54-55; Barskett 1972, 56-57; Haring 1910, 58).

Among certain colonists of St. Kitts and Nevis there appears to have been considerable interest in the little buccaneer settlement at Tortuga. In fact, the founding governor of Nevis, a mariner named Anthony Hilton, whose "acquaintance among the rovers of all nationalities was more extensive and peculiar than was fitting even in those days of laxity," organized the first attempt to colonize Tortuga (Newton 1914, 103). While petitioning in England to secure his governorship of Nevis, Hilton learned of Toledo's reduction of that colony. Already in financial straits

with respect to his venture there, he returned to Nevis in 1630 only long enough to gather up a few followers, French and English, to seek their fortune at Tortuga (103). Apparently they favored the new abode, for they dispatched representatives to London to seek corporate backing for developing a plantation colony there. Support was readily secured from the Providence Company, a Puritan establishment bolstered by Henry and Robert Rich, the Earls, respectively, of Holland and Warwick. They already held colonial interests in the Bermudas, as well as a small island off the Nicaraguan coast which bore the company's name; this Providence Island was developing at the same time as Tortuga into a lively base of operations for privateers. To include Tortuga, the Earl of Holland petitioned King Charles I to enlarge the northern limits of the company's prior domain,²⁰ and a new grant was drawn up accordingly in June of 1631.

The Providence Company assumed the bulk of the cost to fortify Tortuga with a magazine and six guns, and Captain Hilton was appointed governor, with Christopher Wormeley his lieutenant (104-5). The colony at this time consisted of about 150 persons, and it was agreed that the Providence Company should receive twenty percent of all commodities produced there (Haring 1910, 59). To commemorate the new arrangement, the name of the island was officially changed to Association. The largest hoped-for profits would derive not from tobacco plantations, but from the harvest of logwood, which grew naturally in abundance, for sale to the European dye industry. Although some additional settlers arrived from England with the ordnance in the summer of 1631, it was decided to recruit most of

the needed workers from other colonies, especially Nevis and St. Kitts. Few heeded the call. A planter by the name of Samuel Filby arrived with his entourage from St. Kitts in 1632, but the company found it impossible to entice sufficient numbers of workmen from the other islands to cut logwood. Meanwhile, Dutch and French interlopers were clearing large quantities of the wood, for which Governor Hilton extracted a personal commission on the side. Hilton's suitability to govern the colony was seriously questioned by the Providence Company. Not only did he collaborate with rovers and rival woodcutters, but also, according to Filby's accusation, he confiscated the colony's entire tobacco crop for his own profit (Newton 1914, 152). Despite continuous squabbling among invested parties about the deteriorating state of affairs, a second magazine was installed in 1632, and the following year it was agreed to procure African slave labor from Dutch traders to cut the company's logwood (106-9).

By 1634 the colony at Tortuga remained "very poor and struggling" (Haring 1910, 60); and within the year, nearly all the emigrants from England succumbed to fever (Newton 1914, 152). But the buccaneers who used the island's harbor as a base for their roving appear to have thrived well enough, stinging the Spaniards at Cuba, San Domingo, and Puerto Rico (192). The previous year, an English trading ship, *Hunter*, had turned privateer en route to Tortuga, bringing in two Spanish prizes captured in the Canary Islands. In Tortuga, one of these was converted to a man of war by the buccaneers, who cruised with it for additional Spanish prey in the Mona and Windward passages. Returning to Tortuga for fresh

water and supplies, they made the island "a headquarters for their piratical enterprise" (153). Hilton continued his connivance with buccaneers and interlopers, but it was rumored that he intended to abandon the colony altogether for more lucrative pursuits. The colonists grew despondent, and the Providence Company had to offer them special incentives to dissuade them from "changing certain ways of profit already discovered for uncertain hopes suggested by fancy or persuasion" (*Colonial State Papers, America & West Indies, 1574-1660*, 174-75, quoted in Haring 1910, 60). Hilton died before he could be replaced and was succeeded by Wormeley, who likewise directed most of his energies toward exacting his personal share of booty brought in by privateers. The incipient colony had regressed once again into little more than a pirate hold, and the Spanish authorities at Santo Domingo were once again determined to stamp it out (Newton 1914, 192, 192n).

In 1634 they got their chance. An Irish renegade from Tortuga, whom the Spaniards called Don Juan Morf (John Murphy?), had quit the colony in disgruntlement and gone over to Santo Domingo. Apparently he had quite an axe to grind, for he provided the Spaniards with the necessary intelligence to plan an attack on Tortuga, and he planned to take an active role. By the end of the year a force of 250 footsoldiers prepared to sail under the command of Don Ruy Fernández de Fuenmayor. The *armadilla* reached Tortuga in January of 1635; but upon attempting to penetrate the harbor, which afforded only a narrow channel of sufficient depth, all the ships were stranded upon offshore reefs. Their unfortunate entry allowed Governor Wormeley²¹ and several of his associates enough time to

escape in a small barque with a few valuables, while the rest of the island's inhabitants were left to fend for themselves. Meanwhile, Fuenmayor had managed to land about thirty of his men in canoes and overtook the battery of six cannon with little difficulty. Afterwards, reinforced with 200 more soldiers from the ships, he advanced on the settlement. Before the invasion, the population of Tortuga had grown, at least by the Spanish account, to include six hundred arms-bearing men, plus slaves, women, and children.²² The first seventy or so captured were quickly put to the sword, but a few, more fortunate colonists, like Wormeley made their escape under sail. Fuenmayor's troops occupied the island for about a month, razing houses, burning the tobacco plantations, and hunting down fugitives who had fled to the interior. Those who were caught and those who surrendered were summarily hanged (Haring 1910, 60-61; Newton 1914, 192-93; Crouse 1940 82-83).

The Spanish massacre pretty much ended the brief tenure of Tortuga, or Association, as an English colony. The Providence Company made some efforts to re-establish control there, but these proved futile. In 1635 the company appointed Nicholas Reskeimer (or Riskinner) as governor of Association. His party, including some survivors of the Spanish attack who had escaped to England on the *William and Anne*, arrived at the island in the *Expectation* that year with "30 muskets, 10 pistols, 2 pieces of ordnance, 33 barrels of powder, shot and match, 30 swords, [and] a drum and flag" to defend the settlement against the Spaniards (Newton 1914, 211-12, 212n). Reskeimer died of fever soon after his arrival, and the remaining eighty English settlers formed an interim council to await a new

governor, who never arrived. They found themselves unable to subjugate the island's hundred-and-fifty Negroes. Many of these escaped to the interior or were captured and sold by the French, who had begun refrequenting the island for logwood and salt. By 1637, the English colonists, having returned to hunting for a livelihood, abandoned Tortuga altogether and crossed the channel to try their luck on Hispaniola.²³

Six years after its initial investment in the island, the Providence Company finally abandoned any attempt to develop a colony on Tortuga (Newton 1914, 213-16; Haring 1910, 62). Although the island's association with the Providence Company failed as a corporate venture, it provided a critical formative stage in Tortuga's evolution as a major pirate base. It had been, to quote Newton, "perhaps the strangest alliance that the islands have ever seen--an association between strict and godly Puritans...and the 'cow-killers' or buccaneers of Hispaniola who were notorious for their licentious and bloodthirsty savagery" (1933, 168). But the Puritan colonists demonstrated, as had the Elizabethan corsairs before them, a remarkable penchant for combining piety and piracy with commensurate zeal. Privateering played an integral role in the commercial efforts of the Providence Company's colonists, both around Tortuga and in the western Caribbean from their base on Providence Island. But more important than reinforcing a piratical bent at Tortuga, which had probably developed there to a considerable degree already, the incorporation of the island into the Puritan colonial network greatly expanded the operating range of Tortuga's buccaneers.

As the Providence Company extended its influence in the western Caribbean, through trade with the Indians and privateering exploits along the entire coast of Central America, exposure by association with the company to new places, native allies, and more vulnerable Spanish targets no doubt fueled the knowledge and ambitions of the buccaneers. Important contacts must have been made with men such as Blauvelt (Bluefields), the Dutch pirate who began as a shipwright on Providence Island, explored the recesses of the Miskito Shore, sailed to England in 1637 as mate of the *Expectation* to report his findings to the Providence Company (Newton 1914, 272-74), later maintained a trading and privateering outpost among the Indians at Cape Gracias a Dios, and may still have been sailing among the buccaneers of Tortuga and Jamaica as late as 1663 (Haring 1910, 273).²⁴ The stage was now set, in other words, for Tortuga to transform from a localized source of irritation to seat of regional threat. But first it would have to be fortified against further Spanish reprisal.

Adventurers of mixed nationalities inevitably filtered back to the deserted settlement; some returned from Hispaniola across the narrow channel, while others drifted in from islands more distant. Perhaps forty Frenchmen were holding the island when a fresh infusion of three hundred English arrived from Nevis and St. Kitts under the leadership of William Summers. Because the English outnumbered the French, the settlers selected as their chief a Captain Roger Floud, former sheriff on Providence Island. He soon proved most unpopular, however, and was replaced by a certain James, who bestowed upon himself the title of president. James wanted to

restore the colony to the aegis of the Providence Company, but owing to his brutal treatment of the French contingent, he never got the opportunity to do so (Newton 1914, 280; Crouse 1940, 84; Vaissière, quoting de Poincy, 1909, 375).

At least one disgruntled Frenchman had slipped away to St. Christopher to urge the French governor, Général de Poincy, to liberate his compatriots and seize Tortuga for France. The governor recognized a perfect opportunity not only to increase his country's holdings in the West Indies, but also to divest his own colony of an embarrassing number of Huguenots. These immigrants, had he strictly complied with the colony's charter, should never have been allowed there. Many of the French Protestants had arrived in the Indies after the capitulation of their last stronghold in France, La Rochelle, in 1628. Among St. Christopher's most prominent Huguenots, however, a Monsieur Le Vasseur²⁵ had come with the founding settlers in 1625 and made himself a valued, but overly visible advisor to the governor. Le Vasseur's specialty was engineering fortresses, and it was he who agreed²⁶ to head a force of Huguenots against Tortuga and, if successful, to become its new governor. In the spring of 1640, Le Vasseur and forty-nine others set out with the design of taking Tortuga, but their barque sailed first to Port-Margot,²⁷ on the north side of Hispaniola. There they remained for three months to reconnoiter the situation, meanwhile recruiting another forty or fifty men from among the *bucaniers*. Le Vasseur then visited the English commander (presumably President James)²⁸ and the two pretended to good relations. On the last day of August,²⁹ however, on the pretext that the English had abused his

countrymen and had previously confiscated one of de Poincy's barques without warrant, Le Vasseur surprised their settlement and took prisoner their chief. Bewildered by this sudden turn of events, the English fled while Le Vasseur, against their return, immediately set to barricading the place. Seeing their opponents, few as they were, so determinedly entrenched and ready to defend their ground, the English removed to Hispaniola. A few days later they returned, and in a last attempt to recoup their loss, besieged the settlement for ten days, but to no avail. Le Vasseur then set forth his terms before the English commander: depart fully within twenty-four hours, or no quarter would be given to any who remained. Packing what belongings they could, off they sailed in a barque bound for Providence Island, leaving Le Vasseur in full possession of the desolate little island and three small cannon left behind by the English (De Poincy, in Vaissière 1909, 375-78; Du Tertre 1667, tom. 1, 169-71; Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 14-15; Haring 1910, 63-64; Newton 1914, 282; Crouse 1940, 86-87).

Le Vasseur wasted no time employing his skills as a military engineer to fortify the island. The Spaniards, he resolved, would have no chance to uproot him as they had the English five years earlier. Ingeniously, he transformed the rocky heights of the island into an inviolable stronghold³⁰ with several cannon commanding the harbor. Upon the loftiest and most inaccessible point of the citadel he fashioned his personal "*colombier*," or dovecote, from which he could personally espy any approach to the settlement (Leperc 1925, 18-19). The *boucaniers* and pirates were most impressed with his exploit and, now that the port was secure,

called at Tortuga in ever greater numbers. Le Vasseur reserved for himself, of course, a handsome share of their profits.³¹ The Spaniards, to be sure, became increasingly irritated about the resurrection of the little buccaneers' nest; and in 1643 a new punitive force, this time composed of six ships and about six hundred troops, sailed from Santo Domingo determined to destroy it yet again. All confidence, Le Vasseur allowed their fleet to clear the mouth of the harbor and approach well within range of the fort before giving the order to fire. The first salvo sank one of the principal vessels on the spot, and the other ships removed downshore to a safer anchorage near Cayone,³² some miles away from the guns. There they landed the company of six hundred and prepared to storm the fortress by land, but never reached it. An ambush set by Le Vasseur's men snared over a hundred of them, and the rest fled back to the ships, departing the next day for Santo Domingo (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 172; Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 16-17; Lepers 1925, 19).

Le Vasseur appears to have started out, at least, as a very capable administrator and ruled over Tortuga for another nine years without further molestation from Spain or any other nation. Nominally, of course, he maintained custody of the island as an agent of Governor-General de Poinoy, in the name of his Catholic Majesty. In practice, however, he consolidated his power by courting rovers and adventurers of all nations, and conferred special privileges upon Protestants, especially Huguenots like himself. As the port prospered, Le Vasseur accumulated great personal wealth, but his authoritarian and maverick policies engendered considerable jealousy and opposition, both internally and

from higher authorities abroad. If we are to credit the reports of the Jesuit chroniclers, who likely harbored little sympathy for the heretic, Le Vasseur's behavior lapsed from despotic to despicable. He began by persecuting Catholics in the settlement, first by prohibiting public demonstration of their faith and then by burning their chapel and expelling their priests.³³ He also imposed excessive taxes on hides brought to Tortuga by the *boucaniers*, and, according to Du Tertre, instituted much worse practices:

He became so severe as to punish the least transgressions of his people with a large contraption of iron,³⁴ in which he made them insert their heads, feet, and hands: & this agonizing machine was always lowered so that a man became entirely bent, putting him in incredible pain. He had named this device *L'Enfer*, and his fort, where he maintained the prison, *Le Purgatoire* (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 173--author's translation).

Neither did Le Vasseur make any effort to endear himself to his superior on St. Christopher. Soon after Le Vasseur's victory over the Spaniards, de Poincy began to fear that he himself would face serious implication were this man overtly to proclaim an independent Huguenot colony on Tortuga. The Governor-General decided he must lure his former associate away from his lair so that he could be replaced. To this end he dispatched his own nephew, Monsieur de Lonvilliers, ostensibly to congratulate Le Vasseur on his recent successes and to request his immediate return to St. Christopher, where de Poincy urgently required his assistance for establishing yet another stronghold on Hispaniola. Le Vasseur, undaunted by this obvious ruse, received his visitor with all due honors but insisted that duty compelled him to oversee the island's defenses against the likely return of the Spaniards. Sensing his true design had been

discerned, Lonvilliers thought best to return to St. Christopher empty handed, but still in one piece. The contempt with which Tortuga's strongman regarded his superiors only grew with time. At one point he ridiculed de Poincy's demand for a great silver statue of the Virgin Mary, appropriated by his men from a Spanish prize. Protestants, de Poincy had reminded him, could have no use for such a statue. Catholics, Le Vasseur replied ceremoniously, were far too spiritual to attach themselves to material objects, but he himself derived certain satisfaction from Our Lady's silver (174; Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 20-21).

Le Vasseur so alienated those around him that a reprisal from one side or another was inevitable. De Poincy remained insulted and enraged, especially since a reallotment of the French West Indies between 1647 and 1649 had transferred nominal title of Tortuga to the Knights of Malta, of which he himself was a representative (Roberts 1942, 46). With the arrival at St. Christopher in 1652 of a heavily armed royal frigate, commanded by de Fontenay--a *Chevalier* of his own order--de Poincy recognized an opportunity to rectify his past mistake. If de Fontenay would lead an expedition to remove the heretic, the governor-general proposed to award him governorship of Tortuga, half the land, and a tax of fifty pounds of tobacco per inhabitant. In addition, de Poincy and the knight would split the fabulous hoard that Le Vasseur had accumulated after twelve years of skimming from the buccaneers. Fontenay accepted these terms with enthusiasm, and secret preparations to unseat the despotic Huguenot began in earnest. Under the pretext of launching a raid against the Spaniards, which he actually accomplished with great success at

Cartagena, he was to sail with his men to Port à l'Ecu, about ten miles across the channel from Tortuga, on the north coast of Hispaniola. There he would rendezvous with forces led by Monsieur de Treval, a nephew of de Poincy who would join in the attack (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 176-77, 591-92; Crouse 1940, 90-91).

While de Poincy was executing these plans to oust Le Vasseur, domestic turmoil was also coming to a boil on Tortuga. Le Vasseur, like many of his buccaneers, lacked direct blood descendants and had arranged, perhaps in keeping with the *coutume de la côte*,³⁵ for two of his favorite captains, Tibaut and Martin, to become his heirs. This *matelotage à trois* eventually bred discord when Le Vasseur began helping himself to the favors of Tibaut's mistress, and the enraged adoptee plotted with his co-inheritor to murder Le Vasseur. Killing their benefactor would only hasten their joint inheritance, or so they reasoned, and the French king and *Compagnie* would certainly pardon--perhaps even reward them--for restoring the colony from the clutches of such an undesirable. Le Vasseur, oblivious to the converging forces destined to destroy him, descended from his eyrie for a routine inspection of the magazine, where a small group of conspirators, led by Tibaut and Martin, lay in wait. A discharge of muskets, followed by thrusts from épée and poinard, finally laid low the tyrant of Tortuga.³⁶ His treacherous heirs assumed possession of the dovecote and all the goods he had collected there (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 174-75).

When word of the assassination³⁷ crossed the channel, de Fontenay and Treval left no time to waste, weighing anchor at once to seize an opportunity from this moment of chaos. They expected to

meet full resistance, and unlike the Spaniards before, were not surprised to find their ships fired upon as they entered the harbor. These too were constrained to land at Cayone, where they disgorged five hundred soldiers with no resistance from the *habitants*. The assassins, it turned out, could garner no support from the colonists and capitulated under two conditions: that they not be prosecuted for killing Le Vasseur and that they be allowed to retain their property in peace. The *Chevalier* de Fontenay accepted these terms and took possession of the fortress and island without bloodshed (177-78).

De Fontenay was the first to assume the official title of *Gouverneur pour le Roi de la Tortue & Côte Saint Domingue*. Under his energetic administration, commerce and Catholicism were fully restored, settlers were attracted, additional defense works were constructed, and the colony grew. By 1653, according to a Spanish account, Tortuga was home to approximately 700 French, 200 Negroes, and 250 Indians, including wives and children (Haring 1910, 82, 82n). Like his predecessors, the *Chevalier* continued to encourage piratical excursions against the Spaniards and soon enlisted his younger brother, Monsieur Hotman, to assist him in such enterprises. The shipping of Santo Domingo and Cartagena, in particular, sustained such intolerable losses from Tortuga's buccaneers that the colonial Spanish authorities resolved once again to uproot them. In November of 1653, Don Gabriel Roxas de Valle-Figueroa was selected to lead an armed *flotilla* of five warships and several smaller craft, with a force of 180 well-trained soldiers poised for the assault. Bad luck attended their departure, for the ships were

driven apart by a storm; two were grounded, and one was lost. In January of 1654, only the *Capitana* and the *Almirante* reached Tortuga. En route they had captured two buccaneer vessels, but a third had escaped to warn the colony of the impending attack.

Upon approaching the main harbor the Spanish ships were greeted, according to the established pattern, with heavy bombardment from the fort. Cayone, to the leeward, served once again as anchorage for the intruding forces and as a landing for their troops (82-83; Crouse 1940, 93). The *Chevalier* sent his brother and about fifty men to intercept their advance, but the Spanish marines were too numerous and effectively covered by their ships' ordnance. Hotman's men withdrew first to a nearby hill from which they could maintain fire, but were eventually obliged to retreat to the safety of the fort. For three uneventful days Don Gabriel laid siege below, determining how best to assail this unassailable citadel. The stone bastions abutted directly against a steep rocky rise which itself appeared unsurmountable. But, as Don Gabriel was about to prove, against sufficient ingenuity and manpower no fortress is absolutely secure. Availing himself of several resident slaves, he compelled these to scale the mountain during the night with eight-or-so cannon barrels attached to their backs on makeshift frames. At dawn, a Spanish cannon ball directed at the French governor's residence informed him that the enemy had succeeded in mounting a small battery right over his head. The Spaniards proceeded to blow the once-proud 'dovecote' to smithereens, but de Fontenay, undaunted, removed to the terrace below. There he commanded his men to construct a breastwork of

earth and timber to withstand the onslaught from above. This they accomplished during the night and to good effect, but the following day the Spaniards simply moved their battery to a different summit and renewed their bombardment from a fresh, unobstructed angle. Once again, Monsieur Hotman charged the enemy position with fifty men, but in the end his assault proved ineffectual. The siege and fighting continued, in all, for nine days. Both sides were wearing thin (Haring 1910 82-83; Crouse 1940, 93-94).

De Fontenay, it appears, stood ready to defend at all costs, but his charges, who had grown weary of "eating rotten biscuits that stank of rats' urine," pressed him to surrender (Le Golif 1954, 28). After violently rebuking these petitioners, some of whom had begun collaborating with the enemy,³⁸ the *Chevalier* offered to capitulate given full honors of war. Don Gabriel graciously complied. The French were allowed to evacuate the island in two ships, and the Spaniards proceeded to raze the settlement. Once having installed a garrison of 150 men to keep the island out of buccaneer hands, Don Gabriel sailed back to Santo Domingo with Monsieur Hotman as hostage. Upon his release several months later, the brother rejoined the *Chevalier* at Port Margot, where de Fontenay enlisted the aid of a Dutch trader in an ill-fated attempt to regain Tortuga. After a lengthy siege and several unsuccessful engagements with the Spanish garrison, he withdrew, sailed for France, and died shortly thereafter (Haring 1910, 83-84, 113).

The Spaniards were not long to possess the rocky isle, for in 1655 all available hands were needed to meet the attack of Admiral Penn and General Venables. Initiating his 'Western Design' in

December of the previous year, Oliver Cromwell had dispatched these two in command of a formidable fleet and landing force to secure for England a significant foothold in the West Indies. Hispaniola was their primary target, but after two unsuccessful attempts against the city of Santo Domingo, the English had to content themselves with capturing poorly defended Jamaica (85-87).

The significance of this expedition, as far as it concerned Tortuga, was threefold. Most immediately, it prompted the President of San Domingo to recall the Spanish garrison from Tortuga to help succour the capital. The soldiers were instructed to destroy the fort, bury the ordnance, and proceed to his defense at Santo Domingo. Before abandoning the smaller island, however, the captain of the garrison posted a proclamation, both in Spanish and marginal English, forbidding further settlement of Tortuga by any nation whatsoever (113-14).³⁹ In addition, the English conquest of Jamaica eventually extended the buccaneer network with the establishment of Port Royal as a second major pirate base in the Antilles. The buccaneers, deprived of their port at Tortuga, faced continual harassment on Hispaniola from the Spanish *Cinquantaine*.⁴⁰ Many of them, particularly English rovers, assisted their countrymen in holding Jamaica and chose to remain there. It was from this time that the rival pirate strongholds served increasingly toward respective national interests, Tortuga for the French, and Port Royal for the English (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 34; Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 8-9). Before that, however, Tortuga was to experience yet another change in governance, and that too resulted directly from the Jamaican conquest.

The Spaniards, according to the proclamation they left behind, fully evacuated Tortuga by August of 1656. Later that year an English adventurer, Elias Watts,⁴¹ arrived from Jamaica and secured from William Brayne, the new Commissioner of that island, authority to re-settle Tortuga. He began with just his family and about a dozen other colonists, erecting a small battery of four guns upon the ruins of the old French fort. Soon an additional 150 colonists reinforced the settlement, and Tortuga once again grew as a haven for French and English buccaneers. By 1659, enough rovers had mustered to launch a substantial attack against the Spaniards. Their target was the prosperous town of Santiago, located about thirty miles inland from Puerto Plata on the north coast of Hispaniola.

A force of nearly 400 buccaneers, mostly French and under the leadership of a French captain, requisitioned a frigate from Nantes and embarked for Puerto Plata under a commission from Watts. Like his predecessors, the English governor looked to a share in the booty, and he gladly authorized the expedition under the pretext of avenging the former Spanish capture and execution of a few French sailors from Tortuga. In sharp contrast to the sacredness of the season, the buccaneers landed at Puerto Plata on Palm Sunday and began their march through the forest, reaching the environs of Santiago by evening on Holy Wednesday. Before the break of dawn they surprised the town, killing about thirty of the inhabitants and setting ransom for the life of the terrified governor at 60,000 pieces of eight. The first installment was paid at once in leather and hides, with the balance to be paid in silver. According to

their usual fashion, the buccaneers proceeded to loot the town's church and households for valuables while expecting the unfortunate townsfolk to raise enough silver for the ransom. Employing *their* typical response, the Spaniards used this time to organize a resistance against the invaders. Before long, over a thousand Spanish inhabitants from the surrounding countryside had assembled to cut off the buccaneers' retreat; but the latter, always excellent marksmen, finally shot their way through and recovered their boats after threatening to kill all hostages. When the remainder of the promised ransom failed to materialize, the buccaneers released their prisoners and returned to Tortuga, where each man received 300 crowns as his share (Haring 1910, 114-15; Crouse 1943, 122-25).

Though the government of Tortuga, as an appendage of Jamaica, fell again nominally under English control, the strength of the colony clearly remained with its French contingent, and the French were keenly aware of their loss. As early as 1656, a former *habitant* under Le Vasseur and de Fontenay had secured a commission from Louis XIV to regain Tortuga for France. Seeing his design thwarted by Watts and his English commission, this influential adventurer, whose full appellation was Jérémie Deschamps de Moussac et du Rausset, traveled to England late in 1659 and convinced the Council of State to make him governor instead. In 1660 reached Jamaica with thirty French followers and an authorization for the new Jamaican commissioner, Edward D'Oyley, to grant him a concession to rule Tortuga for England (though according to the French Jesuits, du Rausset's authority was to extend only to the French *habitants*). Upon learning of his imminent displacement, Watts made no effort to

protest, but concentrated on packing up his belongings and sailed off with his family to try his luck in New England. Du Rausset thus assumed the reins of government on Tortuga without incident and soon issued letters of marque to privateers, whose excesses apparently caused D'Oyley some alarm. In response to certain protests from his Jamaican superior, du Rausset retorted that he held a French commission and thereupon struck the English colors, proclaiming the island for France. Poor health eventually compelled du Rausset to transfer control of Tortuga to his deputy and nephew, Frédéric Deschamps de la Place, while he retired from the island⁴² and D'Oyley reassessed the situation from Jamaica (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 36-38; Vaissière 1909, 10; Haring 1910, 116; Crouse 1943, 125-26).

Not all the English colonists of Tortuga proved as ready as Watts to relinquish command of the island to a Frenchman. One such malcontent was James Arundell, an exiled Royalist colonel who had co-founded the English settlement with Watts and later married that governor's daughter. Arundell found no trouble obtaining D'Oyley's consent to lead an expedition against Tortuga and bring the renegade Frenchman to trial. Early in 1662, Arundell landed during the night with thirty men and attempted to surprise du Rausset's nephew, but the coup failed. De la Place easily captured the small party and simply ordered Arundell to return to Jamaica. Captured en route by Spaniards, the vanquished Englishman was later executed on Cuba (Haring 1910, 117; Crouse 1943, 126).

England's newly restored Charles II initially discouraged his Jamaican subjects from privateering against the Spaniards, but the

buccaneers always found a warm reception at Tortuga, and this, according to a contemporary document, proved most inexpedient for Jamaica:

There are twenty privateers of all nations under the protection of Jamaica, which being now debarred from taking in their prizes there, will from Tortudos [Tortuga] take French and Portugal commissions or none at all, and will hinder all trade to and from Jamaica and obstruct Spanish ships from going there to buy negroes. In fine, if Tortudos be not reduced to the obedience of the Governor of Jamaica, it will cause the ruin thereof and the harboring of rogues and pirates who make it their living, by which means the inhabitants of Jamaica will desert the country. This may be prevented by demanding Tortudos with two of the King's ships from Jamaica, which may very easily be done, as there are but 150 Frenchmen and one fort with four guns, and it is certain if demanded the island will be delivered (*Calendar of State Papers, America & West Indies, 1661-68*, No.817 in Crouse 1943, 127).

After Arundell's failure, the Jamaican authorities sponsored a few ill-coordinated attempts to regain the island. As late as 1664, a Captain Abraham Langford, in particular, continued to seek backing from the Crown to seize Tortuga and install himself as governor, but none of these efforts ever came to fruition (*Calendar of State Papers, America & West Indies, 1661-68*, Nos. 817-21 in Haring 1910, 117-19,).

For the remainder of its colonial status, Tortuga was to rest firmly under French control; but with the formation of the French West India Company and the subsequent inclusion of Tortuga within its charter, the nature of that control would gradually change. Du Rausset's declining health had brought him home to France, but officially he still held title to Tortuga and was reluctant to sell his rights to the new Company. Imprisonment in the Bastille altered his perspective, and in November of 1664 he relinquished his

interest in the colony to the French *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales* for 15,000 livres (Vaissière 1909, 11n, 12n; Haring 1910, 117).

To govern their new acquisition the company's directors selected an energetic adventurer, one who had already involved himself with various colonizing schemes in the Antilles (perhaps with greater enthusiasm than success) and who had first-hand experience with the buccaneers. His name was Bertrand d'Ogeron de la Bouère, and he proved an excellent choice for the post. Like Le Vasseur, he established himself first at Port Margot, and like de Fontenay, he held dominion, by a commission issued in 1665, over Tortuga and the French-occupied coast of Hispaniola. At this time Tortuga, with 250 inhabitants, served as the capital, while about 150 colonists occupied Port Margot and 120 resided at Léogane (Crouse 1943, 128-29).

The *boucaniers* of Hispaniola received d'Ogeron with pronounced wariness, for they were enjoying a lucrative trade with the Dutch and made it clear that they had no interest in any interruption of it by the new French company. At first d'Ogeron took no issue with them, but proceeded across the channel to secure the allegiance of Tortuga, where du Rausset's nephew, de la Place, transferred control of the colony without incident. With Tortuga apparently steadfast, he continued over to the budding ports of Petit-Goâve and Léogane, in the *Cul-de-Sac* of Hispaniola (Haring 1910, 123-24). He then focused on subjugating the willful *boucaniers* of the north coast. That summer, in a letter to Colbert, the Crown's financial orchestrator, he wrote:

Seven or eight hundred Frenchmen are living along the shores of this Spanish island in inaccessible places surrounded by mountains, or huge rocks, or the sea and go abroad everywhere in little canoes. They live three or four or six or ten together, more or less separated one group from the other by distances of two or three or six or eight leagues wherever they find suitable places, and live like savages without recognizing any authority, without a leader of their own, and they commit a thousand robberies. They have stolen several Dutch and English ships which has caused us much trouble; they live on the meat of wild boars and cattle, and grow a little tobacco which they trade for arms, munitions, and supplies. Thus it will be necessary for His Majesty to give an order which would compel these men to leave the Spanish island. They should be ordered under the pain of death to settle in Tortuga which they would do without doubt if it were fortified (translated in Crouse 1943, 130 from Vaissière 1909, 18-19).

D'Ogeron's mission was by no means an easy one. The sheer number of buccaneers roving the Caribbean by this date was itself staggering; contemporary accounts estimated their combined manpower as 1500 to 2000 strong, with at least twenty-two ships working out of Tortuga and Jamaica.⁴³ Their ranks filled readily with outcasts from Europe: professional soldiers caught between conflicts, religious and political refugees, speculators from the upper classes impoverished by wars and poor investments, as well as an assortment of transported criminals, escaped bond-servants, and vagabonds. All turned to forceful acquisition of Spanish riches in the New World as the panacea for their misfortunes (*Calendar of State Papers, America & West Indies, 1661-68*, Nos. 744, 812 in Haring 1910, 124). These diverse Brethren of the Coast demonstrated a surprising level of internal cohesion,⁴⁴ and poorly defended colonial governments had great need of their military cooperation. D'Ogeron (like his Jamaican counterpart) therefore had to maintain their support while somehow bending their will to comply with the mercantile policies of

the French West India Company. What was needed, he recognized, was a policy which promoted greater attachment of the buccaneers to the colonial soil, and by extension, to the French national interest. Without actually discouraging their plundering ways (for he benefited from these himself), he sought to entice them into colonial dependence using various measures. He encouraged the *Compagnie* to loan funds to prospective settlers and supplemented these with extremely liberal advances from his own pocket. He purchased two ships for marketing the colony's goods in exchange for merchandise from France and brought in yearly, also at his own expense, three hundred settlers, many of them indentured servants.⁴⁵ In addition, he arranged for the *Compagnie* to send wives to sell to the buccaneer-colonists in an ultimate measure to bind them with "chains from France."⁴⁶ At the beginning of d'Ogerons's term as governor, there were only about 500 regular colonists in Tortuga and French-held portions of Hispaniola. By 1669 that number had increased to 1500, and within another two years to over 2000. Around the *Cul-de-Sac* alone were by that time over 1200 French *habitants*, while only a hundred or so of the *boucaniers* continued the traditional hunting way of life in those parts (Vaissière 1909, 19; Crouse 1943, 133-34).⁴⁷

Throughout his tenure as governor, d'Ogeron continued to consolidate and expand his control over the colony, but in 1670 he faced an outburst of serious opposition. The previous year he had returned to France to obtain more colonists and to persuade the *Compagnie* to extend its operations to the Bahamas, where the French could more easily strangle Spanish shipping on its homeward voyage

through the Straits of Florida (and at the same time gain a competitive edge over the troublesome English). His plan went unheeded, and upon his return he learned of an uprising at Léogane against the French company's mercantile policies. Behind it were two Dutch entrepreneurs selling goods in direct opposition to the governor's directives, at prices much lower than French merchants could offer. Despite d'Ogeron's efforts to suppress it, the rebellion spread to Petit-Goâve, and eventually the mutineers anchored in Tortuga itself to demand tribute. Before matters could deteriorate further, help arrived by order of the King in the form of the frigate *Aurore*, commanded by Louis Gabaret, lately of Grenada. Tortuga was quickly secured, and afterwards the rebellious settlements in the *Cul-de-Sac*. Gabaret had orders to destroy any Dutch shipping encountered in the vicinity, and both d'Ogeron's authority and exclusive trade with France were restored. The Governor wisely ensured a general amnesty for the rebels, but took caution from the incident to request garrisons for Tortuga and Petit-Goâve. In 1675, after ten years of governorship, declining health pressed him to return to France, where he died a short while later (Crouse 1943, 141-45).

Père Charlevoix described Bertram d'Ogeron as father--not just governor--of the French colony of Saint Domingue which comprised Tortuga and western Hispaniola (1733, tom.3, 76). D'Ogeron's achievements, especially given the belligerent times and place in which he governed, were truly remarkable. Though he controlled the rovers in commercial matters and even converted many a *boucanier* and *flibustier* into *habitants*, he had no desire to curtail their

piratical impulses against the Spaniards. Indeed, if Tortuga ever experienced a 'Golden Age' of piracy, it occurred under his auspices. It was during d'Ogeron's governorship that Exquemelin and the supposed Le Golif arrived to enter the 'sweet trade', and from their experiences and acquaintances they chronicled the exploits of history's most notorious buccaneers.

Buccaneers in the Heyday of Tortuga

According to Exquemelin's account, the apical figure in Tortuga's long line of buccaneers was a Frenchman named Pierre, appended with *le Grand* because of his immensely successful exploit against the Spaniards. The adventures of this pirate are semi-legendary, but because his story is really illustrative of tactics still used by buccaneers in the latter seventeenth century, I quote Exquemelin's narrative:

The first buccaneer of Tortuga was a certain Pierre le Grand of Dieppe, who, in the year 1602,⁴⁸ with one boat and a crew of twenty-eight, captured the vice-admiral of the Spanish fleet off Cape Tiburon, in the west of Hispaniola. This was in the days when the Spaniards had still not discovered the Channel of Bahama, and went to sea by way of the Caicos.

According to the journal of a reliable person, this was how the ship was taken. The buccaneer had been at sea a considerable time, without encountering any prey. Food was short, and his vessel was in such bad shape as to be hardly seaworthy. He then caught sight of this ship, which had strayed from the rest of the fleet, and steered towards her to find out what she was. When they were so close she could not escape, le Grand resolved to board her, judging the flagship would be unprepared for an attack. The crew agreed to obey their chief, saying the Spanish ship had no better chance than they to succeed in the encounter. They all swore

an oath of loyal endeavor. Le Grand ordered the surgeon to bore a hole in the bottom of his barque, and they prepared to board the enemy.

It was nearly dark when they came alongside. Noiselessly they clambered on deck, with no other weapons than a pistol and a cutlass each. They encountered no resistance, and made for the cabin, where the captain and some others were playing cards. Instantly a pistol was clapped to his breast, and he was compelled to surrender the ship. Meanwhile, others had gone to the gun room and seized the arms. Some Spaniards who tried to prevent them were shot dead.

That very day the captain had been warned that the vessel on the horizon was a pirate and might do them harm. Contemptuously the captain had replied he would not fear a vessel that was his equal, much less a small boat such as that--yet, through his negligence, his ship was ignominiously captured (1972, 56-57).

Unlike many of his successors, who would likely have outfitted the larger Spanish vessel to pursue even greater plunder, le Grand proceeded to conjure up a commission to justify his purchase (never mind if it was *ex post facto*) and sailed his prize to France, where he sold it and very sensibly retired (57, Bradley 1928).

Whether or not it was, as Exquemelin claimed, one man's bravado which inspired droves of hunters and planters to take to sea in search of instant wealth, the story certainly provides a worthy traditional beginning for an exciting chapter of history. The early buccaneers launched their sorties against the Spaniard in the Indian-style dugout canoes which in more peaceful times had transported *boucanned* meat and hides from Hispaniola to Tortuga. Their first targets may have been small Spanish trading barques off Cape Alvarez on the north side of Hispaniola, laden not with gold and silver, but rather with hides and tobacco bound for Havana. After sailing their prizes back to Tortuga, where they could exchange their cargoes for arms, ammunition, and provisions, the buccaneers fitted out the larger vessels for expeditions farther

abroad. Striking at Campeche and elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico, they returned with cargoes of silver (57).

One intrepid captain, Pierre François of Dunkirk, finding no prey in the sea lane between Maracaibo and Campeche, resolved to attack with his barque and crew of twenty-six at the pearl fisheries near the mouth of the Río de la Hacha. To that place from Cartagena came yearly about a dozen barques under the protection of a 24-gun warship. Although François and his buccaneers succeeded in taking the flagship, with a cargo of pearls valued at 100,000 pieces of eight, they were soon afterwards captured by the Spanish man-of-war (62-64).

As W. Adolphe Roberts once asserted, "All the great buccaneer captains passed through the school of Tortuga" (1969, 139). Some of the famous chieftans described by Exquemelin worked mainly out of Jamaica; but they must have called often enough at Tortuga for men and supplies or, whenever official policy at their home port was activated against them, to obtain commissions and sell their booty. Among these was the unfortunate Bartolomé el Portugués, whom Exquemelin reported to have seen die in squalor after a checkered career of raiding the Spaniards at Campeche and other places (1972, 64-66). And there was the Dutchman, Roche Brasiliano, whose crew Le Golif claimed to have joined in Hispaniola (Le Golif, 1954, 32), and who also lay frequently in the road to Campeche, "his usual place for marauding" (Exquemelin 1972, 68). Lewis Scot (or Scott), according to Exquemelin, was the first buccaneer to extend his piratical depredations to land assaults by taking the town of Campeche;⁴⁹ overland maneuvers against Granada and Panamá became

common under the likes of John Davis, Edward Mansvelt, Henry Morgan, and others (69-70).

One 'curiously motivated buccaneer was a Frenchman from Languedoc, the Sieur de Montbars, more sanguinarily known as 'The Exterminator'. Montbars' zeal grew not from the usual lust for Spanish gold, but from an intense hatred of the Spaniards themselves. In France he had read of their cruelties toward the Indians in the work of Bartolomé de las Casas,⁵⁰ and their excesses during the Holy Inquisition only added to his rage. Unlike most of those who drifted into the Brotherhood of the Coast, Montbars arrived at Tortuga with money in his pocket and a mission for vengeance. The buccaneers, he had determined, provided the most efficient vehicle for punishing the Spaniards, and they accepted him as captain unreservedly. His policy of killing and torturing as many Spaniards as possible became legendary, and it is said that his passion for revenge was so consuming that he even declined the customary captain's share of plunder, leaving it to his men as further reward. A maverick even among buccaneers, he eventually headquartered his own band on the tiny island of St. Barthélemy (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 69-70; Roberts 1942, 48-49).

It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which history has sensationalized the bloodthirstiness of the buccaneers. Examination of extant journals (mostly dating from the 1680s) would indicate that many of their actions conformed to the usual exigencies of warfare and business. They appear to have killed their Spanish opponents not entirely without discrimination, but usually in the course of battle or because they could not afford to take prisoners,

who might escape and warn their compatriots or consume already scarce provisions. Often it proved more expedient and lucrative to take prisoners for information or ransom, and these were generally released after they had served their purpose. Occasionally, buccaneer captains demonstrated a certain degree of respect toward their foes, or even turned a deal with them on the side. It probably is safe to assume that while pursuing riches the buccaneers devoted most of their time and energies to the immediate demands of profit and survival. Nevertheless, the motive for revenge ran deep on both sides, and cases of intense sadism, unjustifiable under any argument, were recorded not only by Exquemelin, but also in contemporary documents, such as the complaint written in 1669 from John Style to the English Secretary of State:

It is a common thing among privateers...to cut a man in pieces, first some flesh, then a hand, an arm, a leg, sometimes tying a cord about his head, and with a stick twisting it until the eyes shoot out, which is called "woolding". Before taking Porto Bello...a woman there was set bare upon a baking stone, and roasted, because she did not confess of money which she had only in their conceit; this [an informant] heard some confess with boasting, and one that was sick confess with sorrow (*C.S.P., America & West Indies, 1669*, 74, no.138, quoted by Jack Beeching in the introduction to Exquemelin 1972, 10n).

No buccaneer in history exceeded the vicious inhumanity of Jean-David Nau. Like many of his piratical brethren, Nau came first to the West Indies as an indentured laborer, for whom the usual term of service (if one survived it) was three years. After completing his obligation, he fell in for a time with the hunters of Hispaniola before joining a crew of the buccaneers. Born at Les Sables d'Olonne in France, he assumed the *nom de guerre* ⁵¹ of L'Olonnais and took to his new profession with unprecedented vengeance. After

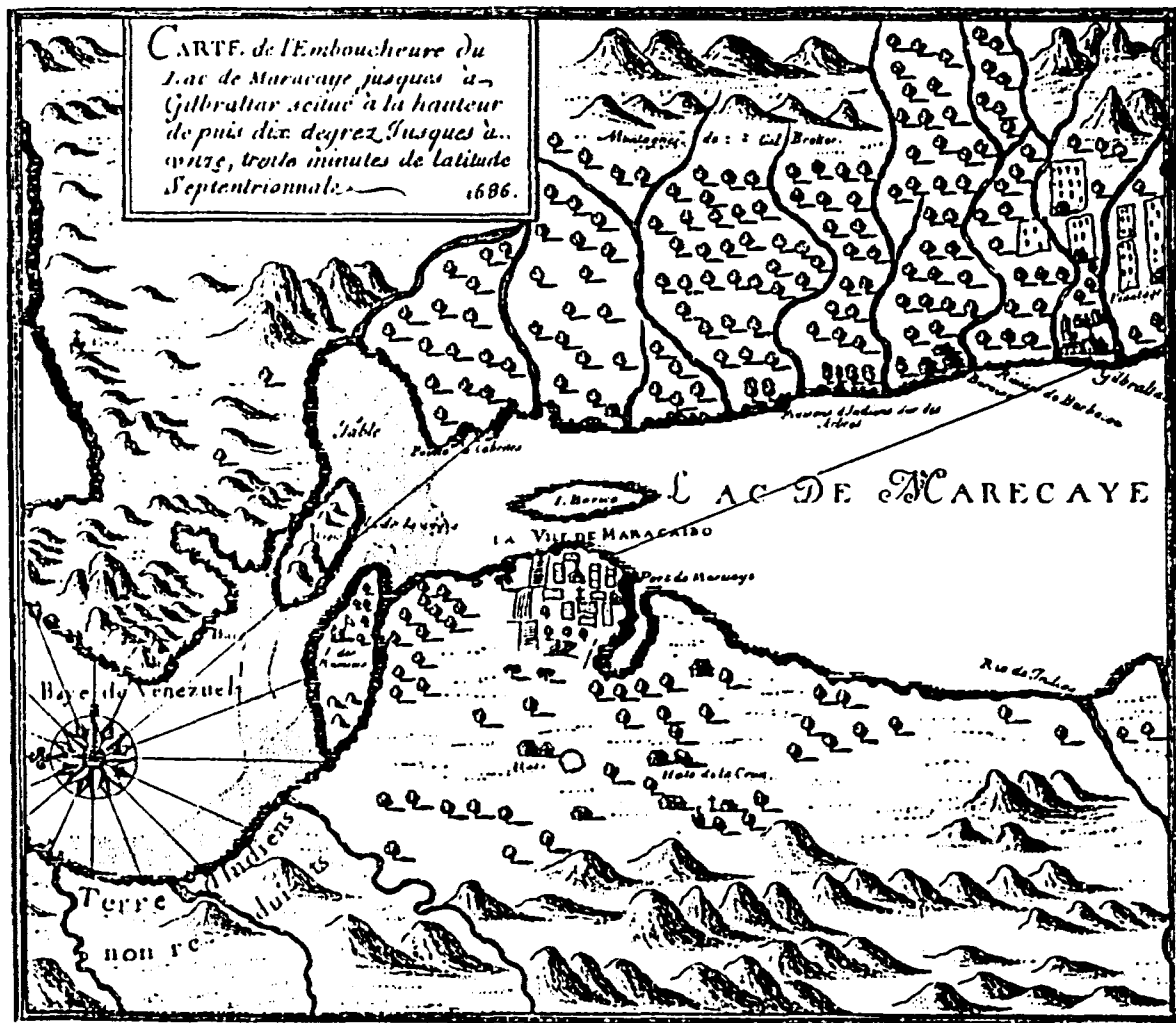
proving his courage and resourcefulness on two or three voyages with the buccaneers, he was rewarded, wrote Exquemelin, with command of his own ship by M. de la Place, then still governor of Tortuga.

With this vessel L'Olonnais plundered far and wide, enlarging his reputation for brutality against the Spaniards until he shipwrecked off the coast of Campeche, where most of his crew was killed or captured (1972, 73). By stealth and by guile, he managed to escape in a stolen canoe and made his way back to Tortuga, while the Spaniards deceived themselves into believing he was dead. Through some gimmickry he soon procured a small ship at that stronghold and set forth at once with twenty men to plunder a small trading center, called de los Cayos, on the north coast of Cuba. There he met with little success, but rumors of his 'resurrection' alarmed the Spanish governor in Havana enough to send a warship with ten guns and ninety soldiers to investigate. Working from two canoes, however, L'Olonnais and his crew managed to surprise and board their would-be executioners, whereupon the pirate chieftan methodically decapitated all but one of the Spaniards as they emerged from below deck. One he saved as a messenger for the governor in Havana, sending a promise of similar treatment for any Spaniard he should capture in the future. Armed with the larger vessel, he then set off 'on the account'. In the Gulf of Venezuela he captured a merchant ship bound with a cargo of money and merchandise to buy cacao at Maracaibo. With this pretty prize in tow he arrived "amid great rejoicing" at Tortuga and set to planning a much more ambitious venture (74-75).



**Figure 10: Jean-David Nau, alias *L'Olonnais*--
 Tortuga's Most Nefarious Buccaneer**

(First engraved for the original Dutch edition of Exquemelin
 in 1678, reprinted in the 1972 translation)



Map 14: Exquemelin's Chart of Maracaibo and Gibraltar (1686)

Peace rarely visited the Indies, but periodic outbreaks of official wars in Europe always brought renewed vigor (and fresh commissions) to the buccaneering profession. So the announcement of yet another conflict between France and Spain, in May of 1667, coincided quite nicely with Jean-David Nau's grandiose design--to launch a mass assault against Maracaibo (Crouse 1943, 136).⁵² Exquemelin left a detailed geography of this prosperous trading center and its physical environs "so the reader may have a better understanding of the events which follow" (1972, 79--see also Map 14).

Situated on the coast of Venezuela, Maracaibo occupied the western shore of a narrow strait connecting the sizeable freshwater Lake of Maracaibo, to the south, with the saltwater Gulf of Venezuela (known among the buccaneers as Maracaibo Bay), a direct outlet to the Caribbean. The seaward entrance to the strait was guarded by two small islands. To the west lay the Isla de las Palomas (Island of the Pigeons), on which a fortress commanded access to the strait; and to the east stood the Isla de la Vigia, so named because of its watchtower on a high hill from which sentinels maintained vigil day and night. The strait itself could be spanned with a shot from an eight pounder; moreover, sandbars complicated its navigability such that ships were obligated to pass quite near the fort. This configuration of land, water, and fortifications would appear to have been unbreachable, though Maracaibo had in fact been plundered already by buccaneers under William Jackson in 1642.⁵³ Nevertheless, the Fuerta de la Barra contained a battery of sixteen guns surrounded by extensive earthworks, and L'Olonnais'

intention of sacking the place required courage, manpower, and enough potential payback to warrant the risk. Of the last there was little doubt. Maracaibo, then harboring a population of nearly four thousand, presented "a very handsome city with fine-looking houses along the waterfront...four monasteries, a hospital and a great parish church" (77). The region's major commodities of hides, tallow, cacao, sugar, and tobacco were supported by rich haciendas and plantations around a village called Gibraltar, situated across the lake from Maracaibo with some 1500 inhabitants. Farther inland, across the rugged Cordillera de Mérida, commerce extended via pack-mules to the town of Mérida (77-79).

Over a few months, L'Olonnais had assembled 660 men and eight ships, though the largest vessel, that of the commander, boasted only ten guns. The assault troops were to be led by Michel le Basque, an experienced buccaneer captain lured out of retirement on Tortuga to partake in the vast plunder promised by the expedition. Nau's lieutenant was an old comrade, Antony du Puis. The fleet sailed from Tortuga with d'Ogeron's blessing late in April of 1667, calling first at Bayaha, on the north coast of Hispaniola, to provision and increase the ranks with *boucaniers*. Steering eastward the pirates met with an armed merchantman bound from Puerto Rico for New Spain, whereupon L'Olonnais directed the rest of the fleet to continue toward Saona, on the southeast side of Hispaniola, while he gave chase. After a three-hour battle, the pirate overtook the Spaniard of sixteen guns and was delighted to discover a cargo of 120,000 pounds of cacao, plus jewels and ready money to the tune of 50,000 pieces of eight. This ship he sent to unload at Tortuga,

with instructions to rejoin him immediately afterwards at the rendezvous. At Saona the fleet took another Spanish ship. This one carried the payroll for the garrison at Santo Domingo, amounting to 12,000 pieces of eight, as well as eight cannon, muskets, fuses, and 7000 pounds of gunpowder. While L'Olonnais awaited his prize ship from Tortuga, more buccaneers joined the expedition. Upon the vessel's return he assumed command, and the fleet--extremely well armed, manned, provisioned, and motivated--set sail at last for Maracaibo (76-77).

The buccaneers knew they must first reduce the fort, so they landed a league away and after three hours of combat managed to capture it. The remainder of the day they spent tending their wounded, burying their dead, and destroying the fort, taking care to spike the guns and burn the carriages to ensure a safe retreat. The Spaniards at Maracaibo, meanwhile forewarned of the invasion by those who had escaped from the fort, prepared to evacuate the city with as many valuables as they could carry. Some took to their boats and made for Gibraltar, while others loaded mules and slipped away to the hills. When the buccaneers arrived the next day, full of fire and ready for battle, they found the city completely deserted. Of food, wine, livestock, and comfortable lodging they found plenty enough. After so long and austere a voyage, such pleasantries afforded welcome diversion for a full fortnight, while squads of buccaneers ranged into the country to track down fugitive citizens. The first expedition brought back twenty prisoners--men, women, and children--and 20,000 pieces of eight. Some of the captives were put to the rack to wrench from them the hiding places

of their goods and their fellows. When torture produced nothing, L'Olonnais hacked one of the unfortunates to pieces with his cutlass. Confessions from the miserable prisoners were now quick in coming, but their compatriots, leaving nothing to trust, had found new refuges. The buccaneers found their predicament as utterly futile but could not depart with so little to show for their pains. So they resolved to take Gibraltar and, if necessary, march on to Mérida (79-81).

Informed of their intentions, the governor of Mérida, a veteran colonel from the battlefields of Flanders, prepared to meet them. With 400 soldiers he entered Gibraltar, where he increased his militia with 400 from among the citizenry. Next he fortified the shore with *gabions*, or earth-filled wicker drums, and mounted a battery of twenty cannon together with a redoubt of eight guns. As a final precaution he blockaded the main road from the harbor, leaving only the hinterland swamps unguarded. The buccaneers, upon sailing into view of the battery, realized they were in for a good fight. Their number at this point was only 380 able men, but greed overcame any trepidations and L'Olonnais spurred them on, alternating promises of great glory and riches with threats of mortal retribution for any display of cowardice. Compelled to approach through the swamps, the buccaneers hacked their way through the brush, dodging a rain of fire maintained by the besieged Spaniards. The pirates eventually reached solid ground, only to be welcomed with grapeshot fired from six cannon. Though they managed to repel a Spanish sortie from the earthworks, they were unable to breach the *gabions*. L'Olonnais therefore ordered his men to feign a

retreat to draw out the enemy. When nearly 200 Spaniards rushed out in pursuit, the buccaneers turned about, devastated them, and clambered over their corpses to seize the battery, slaying every man they could reach. When they took possession of the village, the pirates imprisoned all the remaining inhabitants in the great church and retired to lick their wounds. The next day, or so Exquemelin claimed, the victors counted over 500 Spanish dead but only forty of their own. Most of those wounded, about thirty in number, quickly succumbed to fever and gangrene. The pirates spent another two weeks in Gibraltar--looting, raping, and torturing their prisoners in the hope of extracting more hidden valuables. Eventually they managed to extort another 10,000 pieces of eight by threatening to burn every house in the village, and with this and other plunder they had obtained, including several slaves, they were content to quit the place.

On the way out they swung by Maracaibo and sent word to its beleaguered citizens that they would refrain from burning their town in exchange for 30,000 pieces of eight. The Spaniards finally conceded 20,000 pesos and 500 cattle on condition that the buccaneers cease their maraudings and depart as soon as the animals were butchered. The pirates seemed glad enough to comply, but after only three days, to the complete dismay of the Spaniards, they returned. It was not, however, more plunder which they sought, but a Spanish pilot to guide their biggest and most recent prize over the sandbar. The exasperated townsfolk immediately provided one, anxious to be rid of the marauders once and for all (81-85). L'Olonnais, it was true, would never return. But in 1669, just two

years later, one of his captains would pilot in Henry Morgan to sack the town and environs in much the same manner and with as much or more brutality (120-36). Yet again, in 1678, the Frenchman Grammont, commissioned by d'Ogeron's successor, would terrorize the unfortunate citizens of Maracaibo (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3.,159-61).

On the voyage home, L'Olonnais' fleet stopped at the Ile à Vache, so named for the wild cattle which a few *boucaniers* still hunted there, and a common rendezvous for pirates on the southwest side of Hispaniola. Here, according to their custom, they divided the spoil, altogether reckoned at 260,000 pieces of eight.⁵⁴ A month later they docked at Tortuga to squander their gains. Shipments of wine and brandy had just arrived from France, and liquor ran freely until rapid depletion shot the price of a single flagon up to four pieces of eight. A few buccaneers gambled away their entire fortunes within three days. D'Ogeron himself contrived to purchase the stolen cacao for a mere twentieth of its market value, and with eager encouragement from the tavern-keepers and prostitutes, the buccaneers soon found themselves debt-ridden, sober, and sorely in need of another voyage (Exquemelin 1972, 85).

L'Olonnais set his sights next on Lake Nicaragua and its most prosperous town, Granada. He found no trouble raising a force of 700 buccaneers, for his successes were well renowned. Moreover, John Davis of Jamaica had already demonstrated the wealth to be gained by such a ploy when he surprised Granada in 1665, probably in command of French buccaneers from Tortuga.⁵⁵ Seven hundred men and a fleet of six ships, including the huge prize which had complicated their withdrawal from Maracaibo and which L'Olonnais now commanded,

made their rendezvous at Bayaha to stock with *boucanned* meat for the voyage. From the experience of Davis, the buccaneers knew they would have to ascend the Río San Juan (Desaguadero) in canoes, for their ships required too much draft. These smaller craft they proposed to steal from turtle-fishers at Matamana⁵⁶ on the south side of Cuba, and after acquiring them, the buccaneers sailed for Cape Gracias a Dios. In the midst of a prolonged calm, they drifted with the prevailing currents into the Gulf of Honduras, where they pillaged their way, harassing Indians and Spaniards alike, from the Río Aguán⁵⁷ to Puerto Caballos.⁵⁸

There they looted the Spanish warehouses, took a merchant ship of twenty-four guns, and tortured prisoners for information about the town of San Pedro (modern San Pedro Sula), some thirty miles inland. After thus convincing two Spanish prisoners to serve as guides, and leaving his lieutenant, Moise van Wijn,⁵⁹ to secure the port with the balance of the troops, L'Olonnais proceeded toward San Pedro with three hundred men. Their march was beset by three ambushes, which so infuriated L'Olonnais that he reportedly "ripped open one of the prisoners with his cutlass, tore the living heart out of his body, gnawed at it, and then hurled it in the face of one of the others, saying, 'Show me another way or I will do the same to you'" (86-88). Eventually the buccaneers pushed their way through to the town, which they found heavily barricaded and surrounded by thickets of prickly-pear cactus, but again they managed to force their way. Strangely enough, the townspeople were granted, in compliance with their conditions for surrender, two hours to relocate some of their belongings, though most of these had

already been removed to safety. The buccaneers, in taking possession of the city, found nothing more than some leather bags of indigo for their trouble. So, after engaging a few days in "their usual atrocities," they gathered what they could and headed back for the coast (89).

Van Wijn's men meanwhile had learned from some Indian captives that a well-laden ship was soon expected from Spain, so the pirates removed their vessels to the Bay Islands⁶⁰ to make ready for the encounter. There they fished for turtles and careened their boats, and afterwards, while awaiting the Spaniard, cruised along the coast of Yucatán to collect ambergris and steal more canoes from the Indians. By the time they caught up with the ship and boarded her, the Spaniards had already managed to unload most the cargo, and the disheartened buccaneers fell into disoord. Some returned to Tortuga under Van Wijn, while others, led by Pierre le Picard, set off for Veragua on the Isthmus of Panama, where they found little worth plundering.

Equipped with his most recent prize of forty-two guns and a crew of three hundred men, L'Olonnais proceeded on his original design to raid the Río San Juan. En route, however, he shipwrecked on a reef near the Pearl Cays,⁶¹ not far from the Miskito Shore. During the five months it took to construct a longboat from the timbers of the wrecked Spanish prize, the hungry buccaneers did something most uncharacteristic: they cultivated the soil to grow beans and maize. The finished longboat, even if supplemented by their remaining canoes, could accommodate only half the men, and these drew lots to see who should set off for the San Juan to

procure more boats. Those who won the draw soon lost their luck at the mouth of that river, where most were killed by Spaniards and Indians. L'Olonnais, mangaging to escape in the longboat with a few of his men, set sail for Cartagena in the hope of capturing a larger vessel, but he never made it. Captured by Indians on the coast of Darien, the fierce buccaneer was himself "hacked to pieces and roasted limb by limb," or so claimed Exquemelin (89-96).

Two other buccaneers held the distinction, as admirals, of uniting the Brethren of the Coast on a massive scale, even if only for temporary oampaigns. The deeds of Henry Morgan, most famous of all the buccaneers,⁶² and Edward Mansvelt, his mentor and predecessor, rightly pertain more to the story of Tortuga's English-held competitor, Port Royal, from which they obtained their commissions and launched their attacks. Our concern with them here extends only as far as their exploits affected operations from Tortuga. Mansvelt, we can be sure, already "an old buccaneer" by the time he made his base on Jamaioa (98), may have frequented Tortuga in his younger days and certainly maintained connections there until his death. Of his early career we have little information. Some historians have called him a Dutchman, as Exquemelin's spelling of his name would indioate, but he assuredly sailed for the English. Considering both his age and strong interest in Providence Island, it is quite possible that, like his Dutch brother-in-arms Blauvelt (Bluefields), he began his career with the English Puritans under the auspices of the Providence Company.⁶³ He may thereby have cultivated an early acquaintance with the buccaneers of 'Association'. After the Spanish takeover of

Providence Island in 1641, what better haven could the pirate have found than that of Tortuga, recently fortified by Le Vasseur? In any event, we know that he was sailing for the English by 1663,⁶⁴ and he may have taken up quarters in Jamaica soon after its conquest by Penn and Venables.

Exquemelin claimed that Mansvelt ravaged as far as the South Sea (69), and he may well have done so, but the former's narrative concerning both Mansvelt and Morgan has been proven inaccurate on several counts by modern historians.⁶⁵ In 1665, the same year that d'Ogeron assumed the governorship of Tortuga, a large fleet of buccaneers⁶⁶ assembled off Jamaica with the objective of raiding the Spaniards in Cuba. Mansvelt had emerged as their admiral, but the pirates were of mixed nationalities, no doubt including several French and others from Tortuga.⁶⁷ England at this time was at war with the Dutch and soon expected opposition from France. So while d'Ogeron on Tortuga was issuing Portuguese commissions against the Spaniards (France and Spain were officially at peace for the moment), to lure as many buccaneers as possible back to his side, Governor Modyford of Jamaica was desperately urging them to abandon their Cuban design and sail instead under his letters against the Dutch at Curaçao (Cruikshank 1935, 60-64). In possession of both commissions, the buccaneers proceeded to raid the Spaniards at Sancti Spiritus, forty-two miles in from the southern coast of Cuba. There they demanded ransom for their prisoners in the form of 300 cattle, and when the Spaniards pointed out that their commission was only valid against the Dutch, the buccaneers quickly produced d'Ogeron's Portuguese letters instead (Earle 1981, 14).

In January of 1666, an emissary from Modyford again approached the fleet to make good with the commission against Curaçao, and to this Mansvelt finally agreed. The buccaneers weighed anchor for the Dutch stronghold amid much grumbling, for the crews had no mind to attack any but Spanish targets. A few ships dropped off on their own account to cruise against the Spaniards with their Portuguese commissions, and Mansvelt soon found himself pitted against strong winds, dwindling supplies, and a rising mutiny. The buccaneer admiral, weighing the preservation of his own authority against compliance with Modyford's directive, suddenly gave the order to turn about, and the fleet skimmed with the wind toward Boca del Tora on the coast of Panama. From there they assaulted Costa Rica, meaning to march on Cartago, but when badly beaten at Turrialba they had to abandon that design. Rather than sail home with no purchase whatsoever, Mansvelt then resolved to seize the island of Santa Catalina, known by its former Puritan masters as Providence Island.

In May of 1666, the old buccaneer succeeded not only in taking the island, but about 70,000 pieces-of-eight worth of booty as well. The English pirates would gladly have defiled the church, but their French companions safeguarded the priest and sacred images from such destructive impulses, intending themselves to appropriate the Holy Scriptures for their Catholic church at Tortuga (14-23).⁶⁸ Though he faced no actual reprisal from Modyford for his uncondoned seizure of Spanish property, Mansvelt perceived from Jamaica no promise of any future commissions against the Spaniards. So, like many of his cohorts who were similarly disappointed, he removed to Tortuga where he could expect to cruise against his traditional foes with the full

blessing of d'Ogeron. In 1667, however, the Spaniards finally captured Mansvelt, and at Havana summarily executed him (24, 59; Haring 1910, 137n).

With the departure of so many privateers, Modyford found his colony virtually devoid of naval protection, a situation so desperate that the Jamaican Council resolved, regardless of the Crown's official stance, to woo the buccaneers back with extremely liberal letters of marque against the Spaniards (Cruikshank 1935, 61-62; Earle 1981, 25, 51). Later, in defense of his action, Modyford described the result in a letter to Lord Arlington:

Had it not been for that seasonable action, I could not have kept my place against the French buccaneers, who would have ruined all the seaside plantations at least, whereas I now draw from them mainly, and lately David Marteen, the best man of Tortuga, that has two frigates at sea, has promised to bring in both (*Calendar of State Papers, America & West Indies*, No. 1264, quoted by Haring 1910, 131-32).

The privateers indeed returned, and the young Welshman, Henry Morgan, inherited the admiralty. Santa Catalina, held for some months after Mansvelt's departure by only fifty-one buccaneers, had been swiftly recaptured by the Spaniards (Earle 1981, 27-39); but in a few years it would return to pirate clutches. In the meantime, under the able leadership of Morgan, the buccaneers were anything but idle.

In 1668 the pirate fleet assembled in the South Cays,⁶⁹ like the adjacent Isle of Pines a familiar rendezvous for buccaneers on the south side of Cuba. French buccaneers from Tortuga and Hispaniola joined with Jamaica men to create a fighting force of seven hundred pirates in twelve ships, all commanded by Admiral Morgan. Their objective became Puerto Prinoipe (modern-day

Camaguëy), an interior trading depot for cattle and hides and, of Cuban cities at the time, second only to Havana in wealth. It had never before been plundered (Cruikshank 1935, 83). After landing his assault troops in the bay of Ana Maria, Morgan marched across forty miles of rough terrain to take the city. Aside from other booty, which amounted to only 50,000 pieces of eight, the pirates absconded with 1000 head of cattle; these were slaughtered to provision the fleet for a more lucrative voyage against the Main (Exquemelin 1972, 105-10; Cruikshank 1935, 84-85). At Cape Gracias a Dios, however, a disagreement broke out between the French and the English. While the former returned to Tortuga, Morgan proceeded with the rest of the fleet on his most daring exploit yet--the raid of Porto Bello (Earle 1981, 61-62).

Though the French buccaneers from Tortuga declined to partake in that campaign, news of Morgan's astounding success at Porto Bello soon reached them. After the Jamaican privateers had applied their usual methods to extort as much loot as possible from the unfortunate Spanish citizenry, Morgan managed to ransom the city for 100,000 pieces of eight in gold and silver (89). Exquemelin claimed that the grand take from this expedition totalled 215,000 pieces of eight (1972, 116). So it was that, late in 1668, when word spread of a new privateering voyage being planned by the admiral, French buccaneers from Tortuga and Hispaniola flocked to rendezvous with him at the Ile à Vache. Altogether the fleet boasted eleven ships, including the powerful *Oxford* frigate, and nearly a thousand men. The original plan was to seize Cartagena, the most heavily defended but richest city on the Spanish Main, but the unexpected shattered

that ambitious design when an apparently accidental explosion destroyed the *Oxford*, killing about two hundred of its crew. The buccaneers, considerably reduced in both man- and firepower, had to choose a lesser target. It was then that a former comrade of L'Olonnais suggested Maracaibo, which the buccaneers proceeded to pillage and narrowly escape from in 1669 (Haring 1910, 155-58; Earle 1981, 107-29).

The last and most celebrated of Morgan's campaigns lay ahead, and buccaneers from Tortuga were to play a large and crucial role in it. Morgan received a fresh commission from Modyford as "Admiral and Commander-in-chief" of the privateers in July of 1670 (Cruikshank 1935, 137-41). Word circulated throughout the buccaneer community that another expedition was afoot under the invincible Henry Morgan, and five or six hundred Frenchman from Tortuga and Hispaniola were expected to join (143). The Admiral set sail from Port Royal in mid-August, calling first at Bluefields Bay,⁷⁰ a privateering outpost on the west end of Jamaica. The final rendezvous, once again, was to be the Ile à Vache, but Morgan's fleet stood first for Tortuga to augment with ships, recruits, and provisions. D'Ogeron, we recall, was at this moment in something of a difficult spot. Peace with Spain prevented him from granting French commissions for the time being, and the little revolt spawned in Léogane against the restrictive policies of the French West India Company was fueling discontent. Hundreds of eager French buccaneers were consequently prepared to join Morgan's forces and afterwards retire to Jamaica (148, 155).

Morgan reached the sheltered anchorage between the Ile à Vache and Hispaniola in mid-September. Several ships had already assembled there, but many more were expected; and as this was the season for hurricanes, the buccaneers bided their time by hunting for meat on the larger island. Morgan also used this interim to send his vice-admiral, Edward Collier, on a preliminary raid of the Spanish Main to procure foodstuffs and prisoners for interrogation. Collier selected Río de la Hacha and returned with maize, meat, thirty-eight prisoners--and a prize--*La Gallardina*, formerly a Tortuga privateer which had been captured by the Spaniards and used to raid the English at Jamaica. This ship Morgan graciously restored to French command as an auspicious gesture of good omen and goodwill (Earle 1981, 160-62, 177).

A severe storm temporarily grounded most of the fleet in October, and while Morgan's men re-floated the ships and made repairs, new recruits continually appeared at the Ile à Vache. Especially welcomed was a Dutchman, Lawrence Prince, freshly returned from sacking Granada on the Río San Juan (162-64). By December, the fleet could boast thirty-six ships and about 2000 men--over a quarter of them French--the largest assemblage of buccaneers which Spanish America had ever witnessed.⁷¹ Of the magnitude of this force, historian Peter Earle offered a noteworthy speculation:

Such figures mean that Morgan had been able to get together under one single command nearly every English and French privateer in the West Indies--a remarkable tribute to his leadership and reputation. The Governors of Jamaica normally reckoned that there were between 1200 and 1500 privateers based on the island, while the Governor of Tortuga reported in 1671 that there were about a thousand privateers (*flibustiers*) and a hundred hunting buccaneers (*boucaniers*)

in Tortuga and Hispaniola,⁷² so that something like eighty per cent of the available manpower had flocked to Morgan's flag at Isla Vaca (1981, 180).

All was now ready for a major invasion against the Spaniards, and rumor of imminent peace between the Spanish and English colonies meant the buccaneers needed to act soon. But first they had to agree on a target worthy of their strength. Santiago de Cuba? Vera Cruz in Mexico? Cartagena? or Panamá? All were considered, but it was Panamá--rich, ripe, and never threatened since Drake's attempt--which got the vote (176, 181-82). The Panamá campaign would require a long and arduous journey across the Isthmus, but the buccaneers were now experienced in such undertakings. First, however, a few preliminaries demanded their attention. Providence Island (or Santa Catalina), previously won by Morgan's predecessor but recaptured soon after by the Spaniards, lay within easy reach on their way to the Main. With such a powerful fleet, Morgan could easily return that strategic island to the English realm while at the same time procuring Spanish informants and a secure base for the present expedition (and possibly future ones). After a half-hearted skirmish on Christmas Day, the island changed hands without bloodshed (Exquemelin 1972, 145-49; Earle 1981, 183-85).⁷³

Now the only major obstacle between the buccaneers and opulent Panamá was the fortress, San Lorenzo, guarding the mouth of the Río Chagres on the north shore of the Isthmus. For the task of reducing this *castillo*, Morgan sent but three ships and 470 men under the able command of Joseph Bradley. In the fierce battle which followed, Bradley performed bravely, sustaining numerous wounds which eventually killed him. Here the French contingent

distinguished themselves by leading the decisive charge which breached the fortress (Earle 1981, 187-93).

Morgan arrived at the Río Chagres with the main body of the fleet in January of 1671. Their ascent in small boats and canoes upriver, the incident at Venta de Cruces, their final attack on Panamá--which was thoroughly pillaged and burned--have provided the focus for more books on piracy than any other buccaneer campaign. Accounts of the booty from this venture, and the degree of unfairness with which Morgan divided it, remain to this day a subject of controversy. By Morgan's own report the plunder amounted to 30,000 pounds sterling, or 120,000 pieces of eight (MS BL Add. 11268, f. 78); but the fleet's surgeon, Richard Browne, indicated over double that take at 70,000 pounds (in Cruikshank 1935, 196). In any event, upon dividing the loot among so many buccaneers, the value of an individual share must have seemed paltry indeed after so long and trying a campaign. Distrust and disappointment in Morgan became widespread among the pirates, especially the Frenchmen from Tortuga (Exquemelin 1972, 172-73;⁷⁴ Earle 1981, 244). Upon their return to San Lorenzo, the buccaneers dispersed. Morgan hurried back to Port Royal, but few of his brothers-in-arms followed. Exquemelin's party ranged for awhile along the Miskito Shore, mostly scavenging for food and careening the boats (Exquemelin 1972, 174-88). For those addicted to the buccaneering way of life, Jamaica could no longer authorize a safe haven.

The Treaty of Madrid, signed the previous year and at last publicized in Port Royal, promised peace in the Indies. While Morgan himself settled into the respectability of planting and

politics, most of his former cohorts sought fortune and refuge elsewhere.⁷⁵ Many took their profession to 'Campeachy' and Mosquitia; some returned to Tortuga, where buccaneering endured for yet a few years after Port Royal officially closed its gates to rovers. Such turns of legality, at least for the time being, served only to inconvenience the pirates: as Exquemelin remarked, "If one port is forbidden them, then they sail to another, for this part of the world is full of fair harbors, where the buccaneers can find all they need to maintain their ships, and food in abundance" (1972, 188).

Eclipse of the Buccaneer Bastion: Tortuga after d'Ogeron

Piracy and privateering by no means disappeared from Tortuga with the passing of d'Ogeron in 1675, but the importance of the island as a buccaneering base--and even more so as a colony--was rapidly declining. As a consequence of d'Ogeron's efforts, the French had leapt from Tortuga's tiny springboard--to employ Whittlesey's analogy-- to occupy the larger and more productive land mass of western Hispaniola. Fully cognizant of the power to be realized from this expansion, Colbert advised Louis XIV to abolish the *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales* and proclaim direct ownership of the colonies for the Crown of France. D'Ogeron had already begun transferring the reins of his office across the Tortuga Channel to the bustling settlement of Port-de-Paix (Roberts 1942, 69-70). This was the first place seized on the main island after the French had

secured Tortuga (Labat 1970, 149), and Governor Jacques de Pouancey, nephew and successor of d'Ogeron, maintained his seat of government there at the expense of Tortuga's settlement. In 1676, de Pouancey found the tiny island on the verge of complete abandonment by its *habitants*, whom he could not persuade to stay. Total exodus was unwise, he pointed out, especially when Tortuga remained the only sufficiently fortified port in the entire colony (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 151). De Pouancey and his successor, de Cussy, mindful of the strategic role which the island had once played (and could conceivably play again), made certain efforts to repopulate Tortuga, but to no avail. For colonial planters, the soil of Hispaniola was far too productive for them to bother with Tortuga (Barskett 1972, 86; Brown 1972, 62, 74).

Port-de-Paix itself was destroyed in 1689 by combined English and Spanish forces, and after its reduction there seems to have been some plan by the French to re-fortify Tortuga. But Jean-Baptiste du Casse, the governor of Saint-Domingue after 1691 and himself an accomplished privateer, first evacuated Tortuga's only remaining inhabitants, then something under a hundred in number (Roberts 1942, 82; Charlevoix 1733, tom.4, 14). Père Labat, always an aficionado of the *flibustiers* and buccaneer lore, described the consequences he observed on his voyage through the Tortuga Channel ten years later:

The island of Tortuga was entirely deserted, all the settlers having long ago come over to San Domingo. I wished very much to go over and see the ruins of the 'Fort de la Roche', but no one is allowed to go there on any pretext whatever, lest the animals, which have been left there to multiply and are intended to feed the workmen when they repair the fort, might be destroyed (1970, 150).

The fort, it seems, never was rebuilt.

The historian Roberts was quick to assert that from the advent of de Pouancey's administration "it is wrong to think of the French settlements as being dependent on Tortuga, or to regard them as piratical enterprises" (1942, 70). Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of planters and other *habitants* apparently abandoned Tortuga soon after the departure of d'Ogeron does not mean that the island ceased to provide a haven for buccaneers. France had officially renewed warfare against Spain late in 1674, and a flurry of commissions had once more drawn privateers to these coasts from all quarters of the Caribbean. In 1677, several English buccaneers, including Captains Barnes and Coxon, sailed in league with French privateers to sack and ransom Santa Marta on the Main (Haring 1910, 219-20). Governor de Pouancey, in a memorandum dated that same year, estimated that over a thousand buccaneers still roamed the area:

Their manner of living is most peculiar. They only descend upon the Spaniards and cruise for means to come eat and drink at Petit-Goave and Tortuga; and they never leave from there as long as there is wine--or they have money or merchandise or credit with which to buy it (quoted in Vaissière 1909, 20--author's translation).

A fleet of 600 buccaneers, de Pouancey noted, had at this time assembled under the Marquis de Maintenon, and from their base on Tortuga they raided the Spanish settlements of Margarita and Trinidad in 1678 (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 161; Haring 1910, 222). That same year, the Sieur de Franquesnay led buccaneers from Tortuga on an ill-fated voyage against Santiago de Cuba; but other raiding parties found much greater success at Puerto Principe, San Tomé on the Rio Orinoco, and Trujillo in Honduras (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3,

159; Haring 1910, 222). Also in 1678, the Comte d'Estrées, Vice-Admiral of the French Fleet in the West Indies, swung by with royal authorization for de Pouancey to supplement his fleet with 1200 buccaneers for a campaign against the Dutch at Curaçao. The expedition met with disaster when the majority of the fleet wrecked on coral reefs off the Islas de Aves, not far from the intended target.

D'Estrées returned with the survivors of his squadron to France, while de Pouancey ordered a party of buccaneers under the Sieur de Grammont to remain at the Islas de Aves and salvage what they could from the wrecks (Haring 1910, 220-21). Evidently this proved no onerous task, for numerous casks of wine, brandy, and other provisions washed ashore quite whole. A few years later, buccaneer veterans of the expedition would remark to William Dampier (then a relative newcomer to their fraternity) that "if they had gone to *Jamaica* with 30 l. a Man in their Pockets, they could not have enjoyed themselves more" (Dampier 1927, 44). After the buccaneers had fully refreshed themselves at Aves, de Grammont led 700 of them on yet another sacking of Maracaibo and Gibraltar. Though only twenty of his men were lost in these engagements, the booty did not stretch far among so many surviving pirates (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 159-61). It was indeed a busy year for the buccaneers of Tortuga and Saint-Domingue.

The years 1678 to 1685 may have been, as Newton suggested, "the great age of buccaneers under French patronage" (1933, 323), but Tortuga no longer served as their principal base. Along with Port-de-Paix, several other ports in western Hispaniola blossomed

while Tortuga withered. On the north coast, *Le Cap*⁷⁶ afforded an excellent harbor, while around the *Cul-de-Sac*, Léogane--and Petit-Goâve in particular--attracted more and more buccaneers. Havens and settlements were extending along the south coast, and the pirates reserved a "private port" at Aux Cayes behind the Isle à Vache, still a favorite refuge (Roberts 1942, 70). At their rendezvous at Boca del Toro in 1679, the French buccaneer Bournano and the celebrated English raiders of the South Sea (Coxon, Sharp, et al.) brought their commissions from Petit-Goâve--not Tortuga (MSS Cox 1682, BL Sloane 49, f.1 and NMM GOS/4, f.1; Ringrose 1987, 298-99). Dampier, who participated in the first leg of that trans-isthmian venture, reflected in a journal entry of 1682 on the fate of the former pirate capital:

of *Tortugas* by *Hispaniola*, which was called formerly *French Tortugas*; tho' not having heard any mention of that Name a great while, I am apt to think it is swallowed up in that of *Petit-Guavres*, the chief Garrison the *French* have in those Parts (1927, 47).

Truly, any further historical account of the buccaneers would remove us from Tortuga, its importance as a regional pirate base now eclipsed by its younger siblings on Hispaniola. Saint-Domingue would launch major raids against the Spaniards for years to come, but the celebrated adventures of de Grammont, Van Horn, Laurens de Graff, and du Casse pertain to the intrigues of Petit-Goâve and other places. Still, we can be sure that an occasional buccaneer--seeking food, water, salt, refuge, or simply an outlet for his curiosity--continued to call now and again at old Tortuga.⁷⁷

The historical span of Tortuga's career as a major pirate base lasted approximately fifty years. Its initial settlement by the

boucaniers by 1629 marks very nearly the midpoint of the entire period, at least reckoned by the present study, over which piracy flourished in Spanish America. Thus it may be argued that Tortuga's emergence as a pirate stronghold posed a historical fulcrum, but such a distinction could transcend mere chronology to embody a more substantive, qualitative transition in the very nature of the region's piracy. The buccaneers spawned by Tortuga constituted a truly hybrid race of pirates, not only by their mixed nationality, but also by their evolving motives and operational tactics. Buccaneering was the creole legacy of the European corsairs. It perpetuated, albeit to a lesser degree, their nationalistic and even religious impulses. Like the privateers of that previous century, the early buccaneers frequently carried commissions or tacit approval from European governments, at least as interpreted by the colonial authorities. Moreover, Spain's American empire remained their principal target, leastwise until its fountain of riches began to run dry.

In the last two decades of the seventeenth century, the buccaneers faced increasing prosecution as common pirates from their former hosts and benefactors. Only the hopelessly addicted clung to the profession, rebounding by the turn of the century in a brief flourish of utterly ruthless, desperate freebooting. Hence, the buccaneers from Tortuga represented a turning point in the very character of New World piracy. From yet another perspective Tortuga occupied the pivotal position in the region's piracy; geographically, we can see that it provided an optimum base for launching attacks to every corner of the Spanish American core. So,

having reviewed Tortuga's prominent role in the history of the buccaneers, let us next consider the geographic elements which shaped its emergence as a pirate bastion.

Geography of a Pirate Stronghold

Tortuga was by no means the only pirate stronghold in Spanish America. It may have been the first, but it certainly was not the last. It may have been the most enduring, but in the shadow of fabulous Port Royal it remains all but forgotten. It was, however, arguably the most critical pirate base in the history of the region, and its assumption to such ignoble prominence owed not entirely to historical accident. True, by the early seventeenth century a base of that order was bound to emerge somewhere, but numerous geographic influences made Tortuga the most logical, if not the only possible locational choice. Reestablishing the past geography of Tortuga will help us understand how it became an archetypal pirate stronghold, and in so doing we will recall and reinforce many of the ideas set forth by Mainwaring, Semple, and Whittlesey. In part because of its insular and diminutive nature, but more in an effort not to confuse the reader, I have so far referred to Tortuga in its historical role as a rather vague and homogeneous entity. In reality, however, even such a small island was and is geographically complex. Parts of it have remained virtually unsettled even to this day. It is therefore perhaps misleading, though traditional and convenient, to subsume the entire island by discussing *Tortuga* as a

pirate stronghold; the reader deserves a more detailed geographical inventory. The following section concludes our study of Tortuga by reconstructing its site, considering both natural and man-made physical features; its former cultural landscape; its regional situation, reflecting both its piratical origins and strategic operations; and at least a glimmer of its distinctive bygone aura--that wonderfully elusive spatial quality which geographers call a *sense of place*.

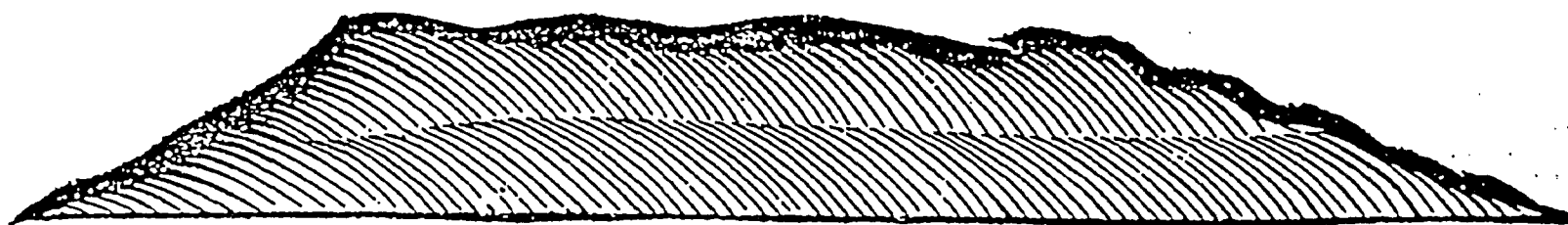
Dipping within a hair of the twentieth parallel, Tortuga caps the north coast of western Hispaniola, or modern Haiti. Elongated from east to west, and tapered at these directional extremes, the island measures nearly 25 miles from end to end, with a maximum width of less than 5 miles. Tortuga curls ever so faintly toward its mother Hispaniola such that its bowed northern back endures the brunt of the Northeast Trades, while its barely concave southern coast enjoys the nurturing waters of the narrow Tortuga Channel. Columbus, we recall, did not name the island for its shape; nevertheless, viewed from sea level, Tortuga's profile can in fact resemble the shell of a giant green sea turtle. The buccaneers certainly thought so (Exquemelin 1972, 24), and indeed a seventeenth-century profile of the island supports the notion (see Figure 11). A formidable ridge transects the island, reaching a maximum elevation of about 1520 feet. Consistent exposure of this interior upland to the Northeast Trade Winds produces a slight rain shadow, with over sixty inches a year in the east diminishing to between twenty and forty in the west. Though Tortuga's climate remains continuously warm and moist, its peak rainy period from

September to December coincides with the region's hurricane season (Centre d'Etudes de Géographie Tropicale 1985).

According to Père Charlevoix, the rugged escarpments of Tortuga's north coast, inaccessible even to canoes, prompted the first French inhabitants to name that shore the *Côte de Fer* (1733, tom.3, 9).⁷⁸ This physical barrier not only discouraged settlement of that zone, but also simplified the island's defense. I have found only one mention of an attempt to attack Tortuga from the windward side, and the veracity of that account is highly suspect.⁷⁹ In any event, the tight defense which rendered Tortuga such a successful pirate stronghold stemmed largely from the natural restriction of approach to the leeward side only.

The south coast, particularly the eastern portion of it, presented the best site for human exploitation, and that was where the principal buccaneer communities flourished. Protected from the winds and rough sea, this quarter still offered plenty of fresh water. It was also the closest to Hispaniola, in many ways Tortuga's sustaining hinterland, for here the Tortuga Channel narrows to less than five miles in width. The most important feature to recommend this stretch of the leeward coast, of course, was its natural harbor, or what the seventeenth-century mariner preferred to call its 'Road'. A contemporaneous chart from *The English Pilot* (Map 15) bears out observations published just a decade earlier by the pirate Exquemelin:

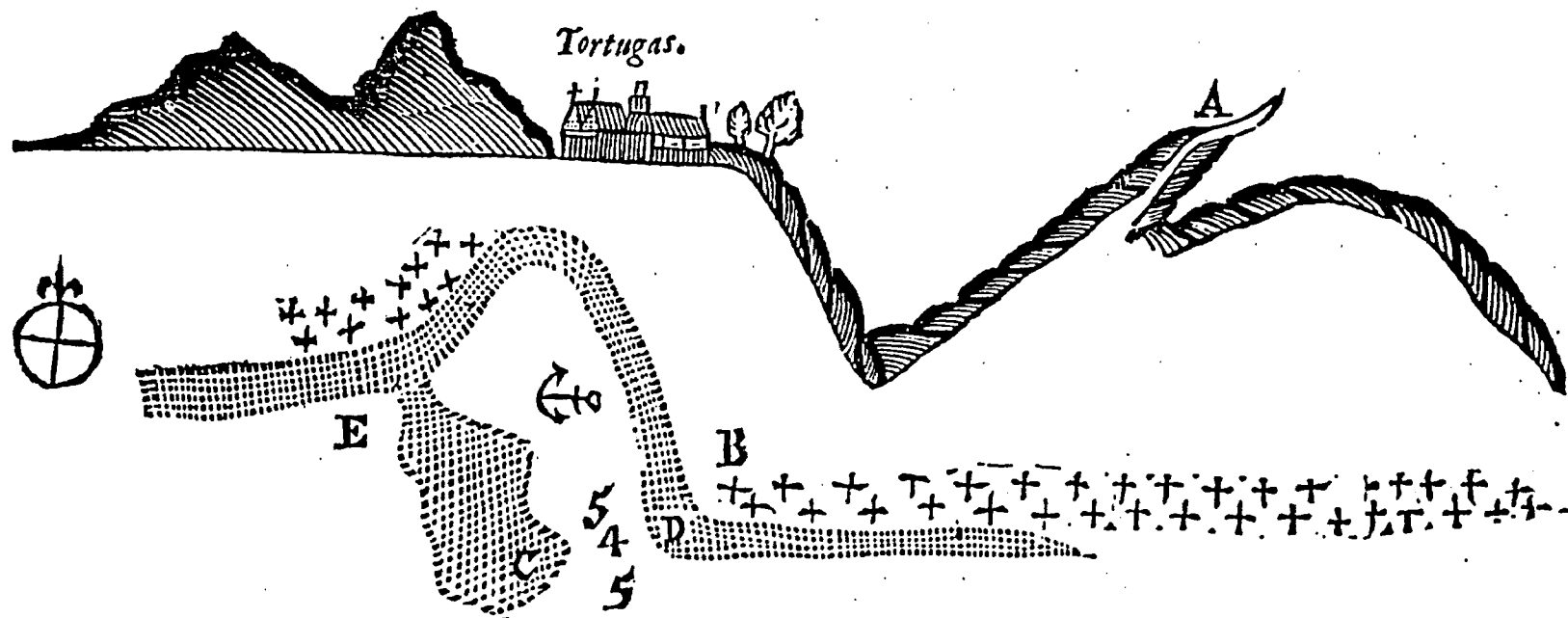
People live only on the south side, and here there is but one harbour which ships can enter... This is reasonably good and unimpeded by a reef; there are two channels to sail in by. Ships of seventy guns can enter, and the harbour has a very clear sandy bottom (1972, 24).



Thus appeareth the Island *Tortugas*, when it beareth E. S. E. from you.

Figure 11: Profile of Tortuga--Resembling a Great Sea Turtle

(from Fisher & Thornton's *English Pilot*, 1689, reprinted 1967)



Map 15: Tortuga's Harbor from Fisher & Thornton's *English Pilot* (1689)

(Reprinted 1967)

Yes, the road was commodious enough for pirates and their prizes, provided they knew their way in; but for those less familiar with its soundings--like Fuenmayor and his Spanish fleet in 1635--it could prove very treacherous indeed. The preferred, eastern-most channel could sustain a draft of four to five fathom (i.e. up to thirty feet); its harbor, known simply as *Rade* ⁸⁰ among the French buccaneers, lay closest to Basse Terre, the main port settlement where storehouses and other dockyard facilities sprang up. After Le Vasseur mounted cannon atop the *Fort de la Roche* to command the primary roadstead, invading ships found themselves obliged to anchor farther west, out of range, in the shallower approach near the planter's settlement of Cayone. Such was the strategy imposed on the unsuccessful Spanish attempt in 1643, again on de Fontenay's descent in 1652, and yet again on Don Gabriel de Valle Figueroa's attack two years later.

Considering its controversial, even pivotal role in West Indian history, surprisingly few maps or descriptions of Tortuga from the time of the buccaneers have been found. Du Tertre's short "*Description de l'Isle de la Tortuë*," included in the second volume of his 1667 history of the Antilles, appears to be the first published geographical account of the island. In researching it, he maintained he could find no one who had yet described it; much of his information was given him by the Hotmans, family of the *Chevalier* de Fontenay (1667, tom.2, 30-31). Du Tertre's depiction is brief, general, and not entirely accurate. In it, he described the island's dimensions, its port, and its useful proximity to Hispaniola. He mentioned the productivity of its soil and the

abundance of fresh water as being most favorable to the cultivation of good-quality tobacco and sugar cane (the *Chevalier*, he claimed, before his untimely removal by the Spaniards, even considered building a water-powered sugar mill). But from a piratical perspective, the *Abbé*'s most interesting geographical relation, most of which had appeared previously in the first volume, was his detailed description of Tortuga's renowned fortress. To that topic we will return shortly.

Probably the best early description of Tortuga, both in terms of its physical setting and cultural landscape, was penned by none other than Alexandre Exquemelin: pirate, surgeon, historian, and--as vaunt-courier of my next chapter I now may tenably add--*geographer*. Exquemelin is best remembered for his colorful relation of personalities and events, but he was at least as avid (and probably far more accurate) in his description of places. His assessment of Tortuga's harbor has already been cited, but he was impressed as well by the island's landforms, flora, and fauna:

Although extremely rocky, it is covered with large trees, which grow where no soil can be seen, with their roots lying naked on the rocks...⁸¹

As for the vegetation, some excellent timber grows on Tortuga, including fustic [a yellow dyewood] and red, white and yellow sandalwood. The inhabitants call the yellow sort *bois de chandelle*, or candlewood, because it will burn as bright as a candle, and serves for making torches with which to go fishing at night. Another tree which grows here is the *lignum sanctum*⁸²--known in these parts as pox-wood. There are many of the trees which provide *gunmi elemi*,⁸³ and also *radix chinae* or China-root,⁸⁴ but this is not so good as the East Indian variety; it is very white and soft, and is eaten by the wild pigs.

As well as timber, much sought after for building ships and houses, aloes and many other medicinal herbs and shrubs grow here. All sorts of fruits and plants are found, similar to those on the Caribbean Islands. They include manioc,

sweet potatoes, yams, melons and water-melons, guavas, bananas and plantains, pineapples, cashew-nuts, and many others which I will not weary the reader by listing. There is also an abundance of palm trees, from which wine is made, and the leaves are used for covering the houses (1972, 24-25).

No doubt Exquemelin's professional interest as ship's surgeon compelled him to take such detailed notice of Tortuga's plants, particularly those with medicinal properties. The abundant variety of dyewood, we have seen, played a crucial economic role in the early efforts to colonize the island, attracting not only the covetous attention of the English Providence Company, but also competition from interlopers of various nationalities, many of whom doubtlessly were or became buccaneers. Although Exquemelin informed us that buccaneers provisioned their voyages with nothing but meat (58), one can expect that ashore they welcomed the change of diet afforded by the variety of crops and fruits he ennumerated.⁸⁵ Palm trees were essential for the buccaneers' construction of *boucans* and *ajoupas*, and the woodier trees provided raw materials for manufacturing their boats and naval stores. With equal alacrity, Exquemelin described the beasts, fowl, and sea creatures which made Tortuga their home, lending particular attention to the gustatory merits of each. Here it is worth noting that Tortuga's wild pigs, which with feral cattle comprised the traditional mainstay of the *boucaniers*, were protected from hunters by official decree: "hunting them with dogs is forbidden lest they be exterminated, as the island is so small. Should enemies attack, the people could then retire to the woods and live by hunting" (25). This strategic and conservational policy, possibly initiated by d'Ogeron, was retained by Governor du Casse long after the island was abandoned.



Map 16: Tortuga in the Late Seventeenth Century--
From the 1688 French Edition of Exquemelin

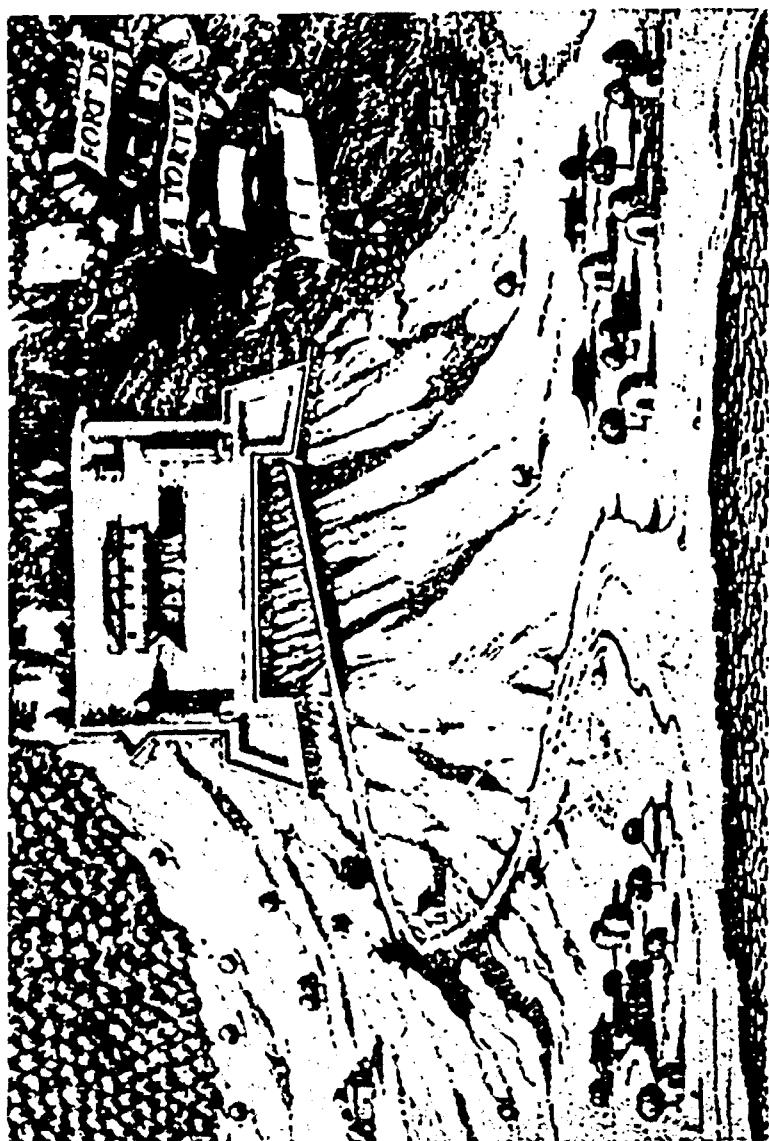


Figure 12: Tortuga's Redoubtable *Fort de la Roche*, circa 1654
(from Du Tertre 1667, reprinted in Kemp and Lloyd 1960)

Also from Exquemelin, as well as Père Charlevoix, who had the benefit of sixty-five years to refine and enlarge upon the work of Du Tertre, we can sketch a pretty good idea of the contemporary cultural division of Tortuga's landscape. The island's ecumene included six or seven communities, and these were depicted on the earliest large-scale map of Tortuga which I have yet located (Map 16--published in 1688).⁸⁶ Probably the oldest and most important settlement, by virtue of its access to the *Rade*, was Basse Terre. Here the major port facilities were established, including the warehouse in which Le Vasseur was supposedly assassinated. Basse Terre (literally, 'low land'), remaining so-named today, may have provided facilities for careening, though the nearby north shore of Hispaniola seems to have been at least as popular for that purpose.⁸⁷ West of Basse Terre and the *Rade*, but within access of a secondary anchorage, stood the town of Cayone (titled similarly today). This is where the principal *habitants* --tobacco planters for the most part--built their houses and the church, probably the nicest dwellings on the island. But the very first plantations, or so Exquemelin informed us, were established in the district known simply as la Montagne. Overlooking Basse Terre and the *Rade*, this rocky, interior upland supported effective fortification and a lookout (or *Vigie*) to protect the the buccaneer community. It was here, near the modern administrative center of Palmiste, that Le Vasseur built the redoubtable *Fort de la Roche* and kept strict watch over the colony from his personal *colombier*. La Montagne must also have afforded the most pleasant climate--cooler, fresher, less troubled by insects and disease than the lowland settlements--not

surprisingly becoming the site of the Governor's residence. A road connected Basse Terre with la Montagne, and it is probable that the same route formed part of the rough network which presently interconnects Basse Terre, Palmiste and Mentrée beyond. A couple of newer plantation settlements had emerged by d'Ogeron's day on the western end of the leeward coast. These were called le Ringot and le Milplantation (or Middle Plantation), both highly commended by Exquemelin for their rich tobacco. Charlevoix, writing several years after the buccaneer, mentioned two other settlements. One, near the island's eastern extremity, occupied la Pointe au Maçon, near modern Tête Ligné. The other, located clear round the eastern point at Cap Sterre, evidently failed for lack of available sweet water (1733, tom.3, 9-10). The forbidding *Côte de Fer* remains practically unsettled to this day, though near the middle of the north coast, a place called on modern maps *Anse de Trésor* (Treasure Cove) certainly piques the imagination of the pirate-minded.

Of any cultural landmarks which the buccaneers managed to impress upon Tortuga, their fortification of its harbor unequivocally signaled the island's transformation from a mere rovers' retreat and *boucanier* depot—to a true pirate stronghold. Owing primarily to the ambitious undertaking of the engineer Le Vasseur, Tortuga's defense works expanded from a small battery of a few guns to the celebrated, massive, nearly impregnable *Fort de la Roche*. For approximately fourteen years, until the brilliant maneuvers of Don Gabriel de Valle-Figueroa utterly reduced it in 1654, the fort stood aloof and unassailed on the very doorstep of Spain's most illustrious colony. In spite of its eventual

destruction, this mountain bastion provided the buccaneer settlement a crucial period of unmolested growth and stability, enough to prove the strategic value of Tortuga so that the French reacquired and re-fortified it. Du Tertre, given particulars and a sketch (Figure 12) by Monsieur Hotman,⁸⁸ provided a detailed description of Le Vasseur's construction and choice of location:

He selected the most advantageous site on the island to place his fort, five or six [hundred] paces from the sea; it was a rock platform, around which he built uniform terraces, easily capable of holding three or four hundred men. From the middle of the platform arose a massive rock, thirty feet high and sheer on all sides. He had several steps carved into the rock itself, but these ascended only halfway; one had to climb the rest with an iron ladder, which could be pulled up to the summit, where Le Vasseur ensconced himself. There was a vent, like a chimney pipe, by which one could descend with a rope to the terrace. At the foot of this rock sprang a fountain of fresh water, wider than an arm, which never dried up or ceased flowing. He had built upon this rock a handsome residence for himself and a magazine for the gunpowder. On the platform he also had mounted cannon and several other pieces of ordnance to defend the harbor entrance, and omitted nothing that a good engineer could do to make this fortress impregnable (1667, tom.1, 171--author's translation).

Exquemelin's later description of the pirate citadel⁸⁹ closely corroborated that given by the *Abbé*. He added that the single approach to the fort was so narrow as to accommodate only two men abreast, and that a later governor, presumably de Fontenay, "had all the trees around the fort cut down in order to get a clearer view of the enemy" (1972, 26-27).

In terms of firepower, a Spanish source indicated that by 1653 the platform held fourteen cannon, and mounted on the rock above were forty-six cannon, many of them bronze; but Haring insisted that these amounts must have been greatly overstated (1910, 82n). Le Vasseur certainly helped himself to whatever ordnance was left

behind by the Englishman James, and Du Tertre said this consisted of one small cast piece and two forged ones, which the French had to pull from the sand (1667, tom.1, 171).⁹⁰ Exquemelin mentioned two guns mounted at the Governor's 'dovecote' (1972, 26); but over a twelve-year reign, Le Vasseur no doubt augmented the island's defenses whenever possible with ordnance brought in from Spanish prizes. The *Chevalier* de Fontenay arrived at Tortuga, as Du Tertre informed us, in a frigate of twenty-two guns, and it is conceivable that after taking possession of the island, he transferred some of these to the fort. He certainly added two freestone bastions which abutted the mountain and shielded the main platform (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 178). So it is possible that by 1653 Tortuga's ordnance approached the numbers reckoned in the Spanish account, but pirates and Spaniards alike habitually exaggerated their opposition.

In any event, when the Spanish garrison left behind by Valle-Figueroa evacuated Tortuga to meet the threat from Penn and Venables in 1655, the men had orders to raze whatever bulwarks remained and bury the ordnance. Elias Watts had to begin amidst the ruins with a battery of just four guns when he arrived in 1656. Du Rausset, de la Place--and especially d'Ogeron--may have done something to restore Tortuga's battered fort; but even if it remained for a time the foremost stronghold in the French Antilles, it probably never regained its former puissance. A secondary fort, the *Fort Neuf* or *La Tour* which appears on the 1688 map of Tortuga, was erected closer to the coast, near Cayone. As this coastal vicinity had repeatedly provided an alternative anchorage for those invading forces compelled to withdraw from Basse Terre by the *Fort de la Roche*,

raising an auxiliary bastion there made eminent sense. Roberts credited d'Ogeron with the construction of *La Tour* (1942, 61), and it may well have been the result of that governor's plan, mentioned by Charlevoix, to improve the island's defense works (1733, vol.3, 82). With the final abandonment of Tortuga, plans to rejuvenate the *Fort de la Roche* were entertained even into du Casse's administration, but these never reached fruition. Tortuga's premier fortress slowly succumbed to the elements, just as its once proud reputation as a pirate stronghold gradually faded away.

I am unaware of any organized efforts to excavate or archeologically examine the ruins of the *Fort de la Roche* or any other relics of buccaneer life on Tortuga. Though I have not yet had the opportunity to do so myself, a few modern authors have visited the island, but they have reported very little. In 1923, the indefatigable A. Hyatt Verrill published an entertaining account of his cruise aboard the *Vigilant*, which brought him, "in the wake of the buccaneers,"⁹¹ to drop anchor in Tortuga's harbor. Other than commenting on the island's sparse population, its port "scarcely worthy the name of town," and its mountainous, wooded appearance, he mentioned nothing beyond the "impenetrable jungle"; but he did include an interesting photograph of the island's rocky profile (216-18). In 1980, a physician and scholar of piracy⁹², Dr. Rayner Thrower, having been "privileged to imagine...on the spot what conditions must have been like nearly three hundred years before," reported that "little remains from those busy bygone days. Along the coast relics such as old guns are occasionally visible through the clear water, while inland overgrown ruins provide

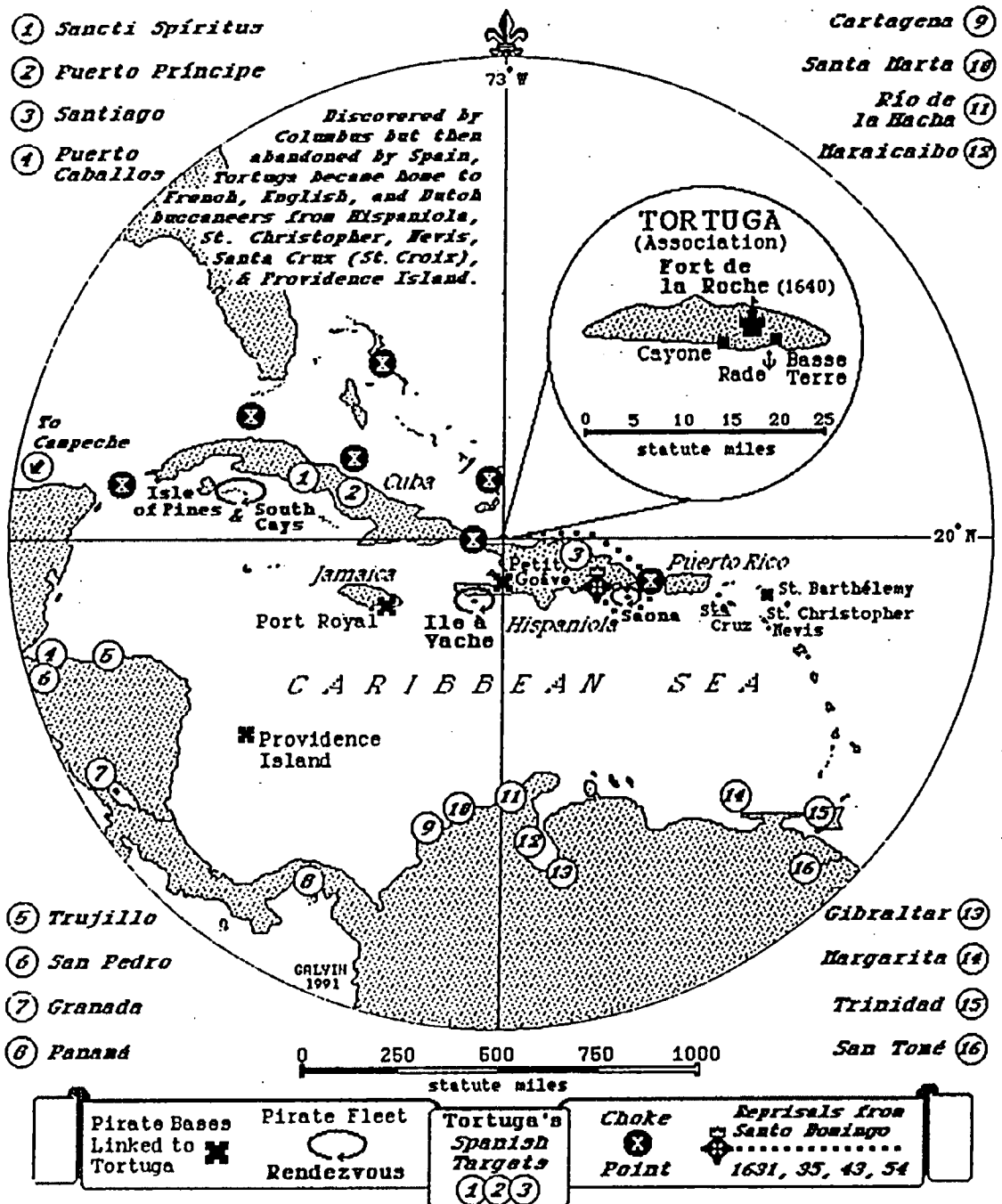
tattered memorials to the past" (137-38). Finally, in 1985, in the "Afterword" to the historical novel *Caribbee*, popular writer Thomas Hoover claimed that, as part of his research:

On Tortuga, this writer chopped his way through the jungle and located the site of Le Vasseur's Forte de la Roche and 'dovecote.' A bit of digging uncovered some stonework of the fort's outer wall, but all that remained of the 'dovecote' was a single plaster step, almost three and a half centuries old, once part of its lower staircase and now lodged in the gnarled root of a Banyan tree⁹³ growing against the huge rock atop which it was built (395-96).

He added that much of his information about Tortuga and its fortification was given him by the island's Christian Brothers (*Les Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes*) and an archeologist named Daniel Koski-Karell, who provided "some vital research" on the *Fort de la Roche* (396). However, he mentioned no actual site investigations, and I have found no reference of any by Koski-Karell or anyone else.

Tortuga's strategic location is discernable from the foregoing discussion of the island's piratical history. Nevertheless, a geographical analysis must address Tortuga's situation specifically in terms of access to operative capital (i.e. manpower, provisions, ammunition, and naval stores) and relative proximity to Spanish targets. If Tortuga was an *enfant terrible*, Hispaniola was certainly its nurturing and conspiratorial mother, and the interdependency between the two islands cannot be overemphasized. Peña Battle identified several facets of their geographical relationship that ultimately resulted in Tortuga's piratical ascendancy (1951, 122). First of all was the Spaniards' failure or inability to settle and thereby tenably defend the smaller Antilles, such as Tortuga, as well as the entire northwest region of

Hispaniola. That policy, whether or not forced upon them by strained resources, left a sufficient opening for interlopers and pirates to slither into the very heart of their empire. Second was the immediate proximity of Tortuga to Hispaniola's vast reservoir of resources and refuges. The rapidity and ease with which the first buccaneers could assemble on Tortuga or disperse across the channel into multiple hidden recesses, whether to live off the land or flee from Spanish opposition, meant that the Spaniards could interrupt Tortuga's settlement, but they could never fully eradicate it or the foreign presence it served. By contrast, the remoteness of Tortuga's earliest piratical sibling, Providence Island, made that lone base far more vulnerable to more definitive Spanish reprisal. Of course Hispaniola's abundance of feral cattle and pigs provided the very *raison d'être* of the *boucaniers* who settled Tortuga. As these ruffians from Hispaniola turned pirate, they brought to Tortuga their craft (for preserved meat remained their essential provision), their marksmanship, and their peculiar social order. Finally, and perhaps of utmost importance, was Tortuga's strategic situation with respect to transatlantic and inter-Caribbean commerce. Initially, the favorable position at the crossroads of Dutch, French, and English interloping provided a seed of settlement on Hispaniola which eventually bore fruit on Tortuga. Later, this same traffic provided the market for hides and *boucanned* meat. Of course the ultimate prey of the buccaneers, the Spaniards, depended on these same oceanic lanes, of which Tortuga commanded more vulnerable bottlenecks than any other pirate base.



Map 17: Focus on Tortuga--Pirate Stronghold until 1678

Map 17 illustrates Tortuga's hold over maritime choke points, particularly the Old Bahama Channel, the Caicos Passage, the Windward Passage, and the Mona Passage. Map 17 also demonstrates Tortuga's relative centrality with respect to the many Spanish coastal targets discussed in the history above, as well as other pirate lairs. Before the establishment of Port Royal, Tortuga served as a central rallying point for buccaneers throughout the core region, from the Windward Islands to the Miskito Coast. Even after the Jamaican base assumed supremacy, Tortuga's gravitational pull remained strong enough to keep the region's leading pirate rendezvous nearest its own longitude, at the Ile à Vache. Considering Tortuga's strategic situation, it is not surprising that its history forms the heart of the buccaneers' saga.

As Rayner Thrower observed, "Considering its importance for so long it is remarkable that so little is known about what Tortuga was like in its heyday, and what went on there" (1980, 137). Reconstruction of Tortuga's past geography remains incomplete without conveying some feeling for the daily fabric of life there. Hopefully, a certain sense of place has already accrued from the foregoing historical and geographical portrayal. Extant records, particularly the accounts of Exquemelin and the Jesuits, relay many interesting details of buccaneer and colonial life; but even these colorful authors concerned themselves mostly with places, dates, momentous events, and luminary personalities. Of the less climactic, sustainable tenor of living which must have characterized Tortuga, we should like to know more. History tends to relate the extraordinary. Geography, at least by my training, distinguishes

itself (much like its anthropological sibling) with greater attention to the ordinary. Of Port Royal, Jamaica, thanks to archeological recoveries and a substantial body of surviving documents, we have a pretty good idea of the daily life which underlay its piratical intrigues: the names of its streets and taverns, the kinds of merchandise available in its stores, the types of glassware, pipes, and toilet articles used by its citizens (see Link 1960; Marx 1968/1973; Pawson and Buisseret 1975). Of seventeenth-century Tortuga, so far we have comparatively few details. One account, the memoirs of the professed buccaneer Le Golif (alias *Borgnefesse*), contains several evocative descriptions of his shore life on Tortuga: carousing at a favorite inn, drolly named the *Rat qui pète*;⁹⁴ battling the heat, cockroaches, and mosquitoes which threatened to foil his wedding night; and many other amusing narratives (1954). Were the authenticity of these memoirs unquestionable, I could cite them further without reservation.

In way of summary, let us briefly evaluate Tortuga's qualifications as a pirate stronghold in light of the definitive features suggested by Mainwaring, Semple, and Whittlesey. Like the Mediterranean triumvirate of Mainwaring's day--Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli--Tortuga offered its pirates a heavily fortified citadel; a protective harbor; a pool of experienced combatants; access to lucrative sea lanes; a market for exchanging ammunition, provisions, and plundered goods; and various recreational attractions. As an established regional power, it supported their piracies with at least the cloak of legitimacy. In the early days of Saint-Domingue,

Tortuga served as a provincial capital; moreover, its letters of marque, whether issued on behalf of England, France, or even Portugal, extended legal justification to widespread depredations against the Spaniards. In return, the pirate fleets of both Tortuga and Jamaica supplied an experienced, motivated naval presence for the poorly defended, nascent colonies of France and England, not just against the Spaniards, but against each other in event of war between the mother countries. Like Cilicia, the Mediterranean pirate "acropolis" identified by Semple, Tortuga was naturally equipped for its illicit trade. Plentiful timber facilitated nautical construction. A mountainous interior provided lookout stations and an impregnable coastal fortress. And while, especially in the early days, nearby Hispaniola guaranteed a safe refuge whenever the need arose, the relative remoteness of Tortuga from more legitimate colonial authorities, such as de Poincy and D'Oyley, allowed its waywardness to grow unfettered. Finally, as a prime example of Whittlesey's "island springboard" analogy, Tortuga provided a crucial nucleus for French expansion to western Hispaniola. In its initial phase, the tiny rocky outlier was easily conquered by interloping forces. Once fortified, it secured French interests across the narrow Tortuga Channel and their eventual colonization of Saint-Domingue.

Notes

- ¹ To borrow Semple's term for Cilicia (1916, 143).
- ² The quote from Peña Battle which introduces this chapter translates as: "Before Tortuga, neither buccaneering nor freebooting existed--or could exist" (1951, 123).
- ³ As part of French-speaking Haiti, the island's official modern name is *Ile de la Tortue*. In most English-language sources, however, the original Spanish *Tortuga* is used. The buccaneers, according to Exquemelin's account, attributed the Spaniards' name for the island to its resemblance, in profile, to a great sea turtle (1972, 24).
- ⁴ Peña Battle's argument reminds one of Whittlesey's "islands as springboards" concept (see Chapter 1):

Como la guerra contra el Imperio español fué guerra marítima y costanera, guerra de periferia, 'desde la costa hasta treinta leguas tierra adentro', el dominio de las pequeñas islas del Caribe resultó ser elemento estratégico de primer orden para las naciones confabuladas contra España. Estas islas sirvieron de escabel al régimen de las incursiones contra el Continente y de madrigueras para interceptar el tránsito interoceánico de las flotas y armadas que comunicaban a la metrópoli con sus posesiones (Peña Battle 1951, 107).
- ⁵ Columbus' short-lived garrison of 1492, La Navidad, was established near Cap-Haïtien, just 40 miles away from Tortuga (Deagan 1987). His first colony, the ill-fated town of La Isabella, was located one hundred miles away on the north coast of Hispaniola. Five of the fifteen towns established by the Spaniards on Hispaniola in the sixteenth century were located on the western half of the island, but none of these survived into the next century (James 1969, 271).
- ⁶ The earliest of these was the Abbé Du Tertre, who lived among them in the mid-seventeenth century and published a history of the Antilles in 1667. The detailed account of Père Labat, who sailed for the West Indies in 1693 and seems to have harbored a particular fascination for the buccaneers, was first published in 1743. The notes of the Révérend Père Lepers were penned around 1715 and formed the basis for the history later published by his Jesuit colleague, Charlevoix.
- ⁷ For Labat's precise description, see note 12 below.

⁸ At the time of the Spanish Conquest, the Greater Antilles were populated by Arawak Indians, with the Taino sub-group occupying Hispaniola. These had been preceded in western Haiti by the Ciboney Indians, a primitive hunting-and-gathering people. The lesser Antilles had been invaded and settled by Carib Indians. Reconstructed figures for the pre-Columbian Indian population of the Antilles vary widely. Estimates for Hispaniola alone have ranged from hundreds of thousands to three million (West and Augelli 1976, 59-60).

⁹ The word *boucan* described not only the smoking apparatus, but also the preserved meat and the camp or station where it was cured.

¹⁰ *Boucanned* beef, according to Burney, was often prepared without salt (1891, 48).

¹¹ Such dried meat is still popular in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The term for it among English speakers is 'jerked meat', as in 'beef jerky'--a corruption, according to Kemp and Lloyd, of the Spanish-American *charqui* (1960, 2).

¹² Exquemelin, who hunted with the *boucaniers* of Tortuga and Hispaniola, had described a very similar procedure and structure:

[E]ach man flays the animals he has caught and removes the flesh from the bones. The meat is cut into strips about six feet long, sometimes more, sometimes less. The cut meat is strewn with ground salt and left in salt three or four hours. Then it is hung on sticks and beams in a hut near by. They light a fire under it and smoke the meat until it is sufficiently dry and hard, then pack it away (1972, 49).

Following Du Tertre's description, however, most modern authors have described it simply as a green-wood grill: "The buccaneers...are so called from the word *boucan*, which is a sort of wooden grid-iron, made of several sticks placed upon four forks, upon which the *boucaniers* broil their hogs, sometimes quite whole" (quoted by Newton 1933, 169-70; cf. Burney 1891, 48; and Haring 1910, 66). In fact the term *boucan* has been used to describe both the slow smoking technique for preserving dry meat strips, and the charcoal-broiling of whole hogs, presumably to a more palatable consistency, for more immediate consumption. Père Labat also left a detailed description of the latter. It seems that even before the close of the seventeenth century (his entry is dated 1698, from Martinique), it had become fashionable among colonials to imitate the buccaneers by dining *al fresco*, on pig *boucanned* whole, under the canopy of the rainforest:

A *cochon boucan* is held in the forest. On these occasions everyone must pretend to be buccaneers... So I had killed a pig...and had a place cleared in the woods... Here I had a large ajoupa built. An ajoupa is a hut made of light poles covered with balisier and cachibou leaves to keep out the rain.

...To make the *boucan* four forked sticks, about four feet long and as thick as your arm, are driven into the ground to form an oblong structure about four feet long by three feet wide. Crosspieces of wood are placed in the forks of these posts. On these one arranges the grill, which is also made of sticks, and all this contraption is well tied together with lianes. The pig is placed on this bed on its back, the belly wide open and...filled with lime-juice and plenty of salt and crushed pimento.

While everyone was hard at work doing these things the slaves set fire to a big heap of wood which they had cut the day before. When the wood was reduced to charcoal the slaves put it under the pig, using the bark of trees to carry the embers, for it is against all the rules to use any metal instruments, such as shovels, or tongs, or plates, dishes, spoons or forks. Even tablecloths are forbidden as they are too much at variance with buccaneer simplicity (1970, 52-54).

The structural resemblance of a raised grill in a thatched smoking shed, or *boucan*, to a type of West-Indian raised bed or dwelling, called a *barbacoa*, probably led to the derivation of "barbecue" to mean grilling meat over charcoal.

13 Exquemelin wrote of developments by the late 1660s. It is uncertain when the first female prostitutes, or women of any occupation, for that matter, appeared on Tortuga. Of course wherever sailors congregated, the venereal trade was sure to appear before long. Mainwaring mentioned that British pirates who ran the Mediterranean circuit most frequently touched at certain spots along the Spanish coast because these offered, in addition to the usual piratical requisites, "a good store of English, Scottish, and Irish wenches which resort unto them, and these are strong attractors to draw the common sort of them thither" (1922, 39-40).

The case of the buccaneers at Tortuga was somewhat different. Women must have been entirely absent or extremely scarce in the earliest days, especially among the isolated hunters. Le Golif, who like many of the buccaneers began his career as a hunter on Hispaniola (c. 1660), described his companion as "the hairiest man I have ever been near in my life, a filthy person who stank worse than a dung-soiled ass. And when I say near him, I do not speak figuratively, since I had to submit to the habits and customs of these men, who have no women at all within their reach" (1954, 31).

Later he remarked, in defense of pirates who practiced that "vice very common among the men of fortune...that they first came to it because at that time there was only one woman among the filibusters, who voyaged with Joseph le Malouin, whose strumpet she was..." (54).

Homosexuality in fact appears to have been an integral factor in the *coutume de la côte*; and although buccaneers demonstrated no particular aversion to sexual relations with women, it is certainly conceivable that they viewed the presence of females as an undesirable source of discord. Fuller and Leslie-Melville went so far as to suggest that the buccaneer order was in fact based on a hatred of women, owing from a fear of disloyalty and disaster brought about by that sex (1935, 72). Such superstitions were indeed prevalent among the buccaneers: upon rounding Cape Horn in mid-February, 1684, the buccaneer Ambrose Cowley reflected, "we chusing of Valentines, and discoursing of the Intrigues of Women, there arose a prodigious Storm...so that we concluded the discoursing of Women at Sea was very unlucky" (1699, 7). Cowley's ship, incidentally had been renamed *Bachelor's Delight*, possibly to commemorate the purchase of sixty young Negro girls as diversion for the crew (Kemp and Lloyd 1960, 85). Freebooters of the early eighteenth century, however, to maintain ship's discipline reputedly went so far as to execute anyone "bringing on board 'a Boy or a Woman' or for meddling with a 'prudent Woman' on a prize ship" (Rediker 1987, 265-66).

Lepers described the buccaneer custom of dividing into pairs, or *matelots*, who agreed in the absence of wife or children for one to inherit the belongings of the other. This practice applied to hunters and pirates alike. (Haring 1910, 69; cf. Exquemelin 1972, 44; Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 55, 67). The *matelotage* may have evolved in part as an expression of homosexual tendencies, but not always, as Le Golif informed us, for the *matelots* had "to share everything, including the favors of madame if one of them happen[ed] to marry" (1954, 92-93). Homosexual relations, in any event, were still ostensibly considered criminal, for a buccaneer crew in 1681 clapped in irons one of their captians, Edward Cook, "upon the Accusation of a Servant of his, of the same Name, that the former had several Times acted the *Sodomite* with him" (Sharp 1729, 73). B.R.Burg has composed an entire volume on *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition* (1984).

Returning to Tortuga's female population, it is probable that, after the Indians, the first women of any significant number there were Negro slaves. After the Spanish invasion of 1635, the Providence Company seized all of the Negroes on Tortuga who had belonged to Governor Hilton and sent these, along with some Negro women, to Providence Island. Newton wrote that this was "one of the earliest mentions of women negroes as servants in an English colony [and]...that they were regarded as a novelty" (1914, 213, 213n). Thriving brothels had apparently cropped up on Tortuga by the time Le Golif and Exquemelin arrived there. At the bidding of Bertram d'Ogeron, who undertook the governorship of Tortuga in 1665 and whose administration fostered the island's most notorious

buccaneers, the first shipload of fifty French women docked at the colony. He had requested these so-called "chaines de France" in an effort to civilize the free-spirited buccaneers to whom they were sold as wives. The background of these women is not certain; many of them had probably been prostitutes in France (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 83; Vaissière 1909, 21-22; Le Golif 1954, 87-93; Crouse 1943, 132-33).

¹⁴ W.A. Roberts wrote that the Spanish made their first attacks against the hunters of Hispaniola in 1620, but offered no support for that date (1942, 43). Gosse, in his introduction to Labat (1970, x), contended it was the Spaniards' slaughter of the wild herds which forced the hunters back to sea: "By upsetting the Hispaniola beehive it was soon apparent that they had disturbed and set at large a swarm of very angry and dangerous insects."

¹⁵ By Exquemelin's account, planters had begun cultivating tobacco on Tortuga by 1598, but his dates are highly questionable. Sugar, he claimed, had also been attempted, but sufficient means could not be gathered to provide a refinery (1972, 49). Lepers gave no indication of planting before 1632, but he did mention the Dutch as the first to encourage tobacco plantations on the island (1925, 11). Known as *habitants*, the planters distinguished themselves from the *boucaniers* (hunters) and *flibustiers*, but engaged in vigorous trade with them. Some of them, no doubt lured by booty and adventure, forsook plowing for plunder and joined the pirates (Exquemelin 1972, 44, 49, 57).

¹⁶ The origins and meanings of buccaneer, *flibustier*, etc. are explained in Chapter 1.

¹⁷ Haring, with reference to French archival material, gave both dates (1910, 58). Newton mentioned the attack as having occurred early in 1631 (1933, 171). It must have happened before Anthony Hilton's arrival from Nevis, and his petition for support is known to have reached England by May of 1631 (Newton 1914, 104). Charlevoix's entries skip from 1630 to 1632 (1733, tom.3, 10).

¹⁸ It is difficult to give an exact date for the transformation of Tortuga into a pirate base. Undoubtedly it was a gradual development. According to Newton, "Tortuga had been a rendezvous for the rovers of all nations, at any rate since the time of Drake" (1914, 12). Certainly the French corsairs, François le Clerc and Jacques de Sore, passed in its vicinity on their way to raid Cuba in 1554 and 1555 (Ashdown 1979, 10). An English pirate, according to Brown, was captured by the Spaniards at Tortuga in 1611 (Newton 1914, 191n). James asserted that by 1625 "it had become one of the chief pirate strongholds of the Antilles," but offered no support for that date (1969, 271). Lucas reckoned it had become their

headquarters by 1627 (1905, 55). Newton (1933) referred to it by the raid of 1631 as "this new nest of robbers," but also stated, rather blandly, that "[a] year or so before 1630 the hunters had established something of a rough place of settlement on Tortuga, where there grew up a systematic victualling trade between them and the rovers" (171). Charlevoix, in his description of events there in 1632, called the possessors of the harbor "*flibustiers*"--pirates, he emphasized, in no uncertain terms (1733, tom. 3, 8-10). We do know that under Governor Hilton (1631-34) rovers were favorably received at Tortuga, and at that time at least one Spanish prize, taken by the English *Hunter*, was equipped as a pirate warship, making regular raids from Tortuga (Newton 1914, 153). Gosse put forward various dates in his writings, but suggested in *The History of Piracy* that it was not until 1640 "that the true buccaneer came to stay and flourish there" (1946, 144). He was referring to the arrival of Le Vasseur, who initiated formidable defense works on the island. Indeed, his impregnable fortification of Tortuga after 1640 may validate the earliest designation of the island as a true pirate stronghold.

19 John Hilton, storekeeper and chief gunner of Nevis, recalled meeting under a flag of truce with Toledo, whom he found "a most noble & courteous gentleman," to settle terms of surrender:

[He] told vs he did not delight in bloudsheed, soe wee would yeilde his masters interest to him, which wee had vsurped, & noe man should wronge vs or take ye life of any. And if wee wanted Shipping to transport our men he would furnish us, giving hostages for ye returne of ye said Shipping (in Harlow 1925, 11).

John Hilton was brother to the Anthony Hilton who had settled Nevis as first governor in 1628 and later attempted to set up Tortuga as an English colony.

20 The original boundaries of the Providence Company's charter extended from 10 to 20 degrees north latitude and from 290 to 310 degrees west longitude. Tortuga drops just a few minutes north of 20 degrees, and the enlarged grant of 1631 pushed the northern limit to 24 degrees (Haring 1910, 59n, Newton 1914, 105).

21 Wormeley was later tried for cowardice and stripped of his governorship, rather an empty procedure considering he had already begun a new life of relative prosperity in Virginia, where he remained somewhat influential (Crouse 1940, 83; Newton 1914, 193).

22 According to a Dutch shipmaster who had called at the colony late in 1634, there were at that time only 150 regular inhabitants (Newton 1914, 192).

²³ According to Charlevoix, in 1638 the Spanish government at Santo Domingo sent a corps of 500 lancers to oust the growing number of hunters from Hispaniola. Because they patrolled in groups of fifty, they became known as the "*Cinquantaine*." These troops continued to harass the *boucaniers* for the duration of hostilities between Spain and France (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 13); Exquemelin described his cohorts' encounters with such patrols in his account of Hispaniola (1972, 47-48). For that same year, but just prior to this development, Charlevoix, following Du Tertre, mentioned a Spanish naval attack on Tortuga, but here Newton has shown their error in chronology; they must have been referring to Fuenmayor's raid of 1635 (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 12; Newton 1914, 192n).

²⁴ Newton (1914, 272-74) and Gosse (1924, 50) suggested that these pirates named Bluefields were one and the same. In his collection of privateering documents, however, Jameson pointed out that there were in fact two Blauvelts, father and son, who sailed for the Providence Island Company during this period. Captain Willem Albertsen Blauvelt, presumably son of Albertus (whom Newton called Abraham), operated out of New Amsterdam in the 1640s and captured a Spanish barque near Tabasco in 1649 (Jameson 1923, 9-14). Winzerling stated that "William Albert Blauvelt" and "Abraham Blauvelt" were brothers (1946, 35).

²⁵ Also spelled Levasseur.

²⁶ In an appendix to the first volume of the *Histoire Générale des Antilles* (1667, 588-90), Du Tertre published the articles agreed upon between de Poincy and Le Vasseur for the founding of a new French colony at Tortuga. The first, which gave de Poincy good reason to be defensive, guaranteed "Liberté de conscience égale aux deux Religions." Further articles spelled out the rates and procedures for levying duties and the division of profits derived thereof (one tenth to the king, the rest divided equally between the company and the officers--of the latter share Vasseur was to receive two thirds and de Poincy one). Also provided for was the construction of necessary defense works and other buildings, and the dispensation of logwood, saltpeter, or any other commodity of value that might be extracted from the island.

²⁷ Du Tertre rendered this as Port a Margot (1667, tom.1, 170) and Charlevoix as Port Margot, seven leagues to the windward of Tortuga (1733, tom. 3, 14). There is a Port-Margot situated a few miles upriver on the north Haitian coast, about 22 miles southeast of Tortuga. Reckoning three miles for a league, this could have been the place of Le Vasseur's first landing. De Poincy, however, simply referred to the "islet Margot" (to which Le Vasseur gave the name

"Reffuge"), estimating it to be only five leagues from Tortuga and half a league from Hispaniola.

28 De Poincy and Du Tertre gave no name, referring only to a "capitaine anglois" or "Commandant Anglois", respectively (Vaissière 1909, 375; Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 170). Charlevoix repeatedly referred to the English leader of that time as "Willis" (1733, tom.3, 13-15). Various authors, as noted in Chapter 2, have connected this man with the Willis (or Wallace) supposed to have colonized Belize. The claim, though feasible enough, appears purely speculative and undocumented. Vaissière (1909, 8) wondered if Charlevoix might have meant Samuel Filby, the planter from St. Christopher who had settled in Tortuga; but according to Newton's findings, Filby had died in the summer of 1634 (1914, 192). Newton conjectured instead that James' first name may have been William, of which Charlevoix might have made Willis (281n).

29 Du Tertre and historians after him placed Vasseur's attack in August of 1640 until Crouse challenged that date for two reasons. First, the articles referred to in note 26 above (which were appended to the *Histoire* because Du Tertre received them after his book went to press) were not signed by de Poincy and le Vasseur until November of 1641. Crouse argued that le Vasseur would never have undertaken the expedition before the articles had been duly signed and sealed. Moreover, he pointed to documentary evidence in the *Calendar of State Papers, (America & West Indies 1574-1660, 316)* which might indicate that James was still in possession of Tortuga in December of 1640 (Crouse 1940, 86, 86n). Charlevoix described these events under an entry for 1641 (1733, tom.3, 14-15). However, by the account of de Poincy himself, in a letter to Cardinal Richlieu dated 15 November 1640 (published as an appendix in Vaissière 1909, 375-77), Le Vasseur had attacked Tortuga on the last day of August that same year after first establishing himself at Margot. It is probably best to rely on de Poincy's contemporary version, which was probably seen by Du Tertre.

30 The detailed construction of Le Vasseur's fortress is described in the last section of this chapter.

31 Duty rates and distribution are enumerated in note 26 above.

32 Also Cayonne, Cayenne, Kayenne, or Cayona.

33 Including a Capucin father by the name of Marc, who had been compelled to repair to Tortuga's harbor during a storm (Du Tertre 1667, tom.1, 173)

³⁴ Charlevoix later envisioned this torture apparatus as a "cage" of iron (1733, tom.3, 19), but Du Tertre's earlier description sounds more like a vicious set of metal stocks.

³⁵ That part of the 'custom of the coast' known as *matelotage* is described in note 13 above.

³⁶ At this point, Father Du Tertre's narrative really stretches the bounds of credibility. His complete version of the assassination follows:

M. le Vasseur, completely unaware of this conspiracy, descended from his rock fortress to his fine magazine, where the two parricides, accompanied by 7 or 8 others, had neatly planned to stage their assault. Three or four of these traitors, upon perceiving the reflection of Sieur le Vasseur in the window, discharged 3 or 4 blasts from their muskets into the mirrored image, thinking to shoot the man himself. Thereupon Tibaut entered the magazine, and seeing that le Vasseur remained completely unharmed, fired at him with a shot from his musket. Only slightly wounded by the blast, he ran toward his Negro, who carried his épée, but he was pursued so closely by Tibaut that he had no time to reach it, and was compelled to turn and parry with his arm a thrust from his attacker's poinard. Recognizing him, he exclaimed, as Caesar to Brutus of old, "So it is you, Tibaut, who kills me." Then, seeing himself pierced by both épée and poinard at once, he cried out "Ha! Enough! Bring me a priest; I wish to die Catholic"--and fell dead upon uttering these words. (1667, tom.1, 174-75--author's translation).

Charlevoix retained most of this version, with some modification, but accused Father Du Tertre of changing the very last part for dramatic effect. Why, he argued, aside from the fact that such an abrupt conversion was completely out of character, would Le Vasseur have called for a priest, so that he could die Catholic, when he knew full well he had driven all the priests from the island? (1733, tom.3, 22-23).

³⁷ Roberts speculated that Fontenay may well have "intrigued with the malcontents against Le Vasseur, much as the latter had previously conspired" (1942, 46), but there is no evidence for this. The fact that the fort's cannon fired on his vessel would seem to indicate otherwise.

³⁸ Du Tertre related how one of the *habitants*, one Noel Bedel, insisted that the governor sue for terms with the Spaniards. Enraged by this display of cowardice, de Fontenay promptly shot the

unfortunate Bedel in the head. Although he had cowed the mutinous settlers for the moment, one of them fired at the governor's brother and then slipped away in the night to consort with the enemy (1667, tom.1, 183-84). Le Golif also mentioned this Bedel, and a more cunning agitator named Piédouille, who rekindled the mutiny and conspired with the Spaniards, remaining with them after the French departed (1954, 28-29).

³⁹ A copy of the English version survived in manuscript form and was later printed. Haring (1910, 113n, 114n) quoted this as follows:

The Captane and Sarginge Mager Don Baltearsor Calderon and Spenoso, Nopte to the President that is now in the sity of Santo-domingo, and Captane of the gones of the sitye, and Governor and Lord Mare of this Island, and stranch of this Lland of Tortogo, and Chefe Comander of all for the Khinge of Spaine.

Yoo must understand that all pepell what soever that shall com to this Iland of the Khinge of Spaine Catholok wich is name is Don Pilep the Ostere the forth of this name that with his harmes he hath put of Feleminge and French men and Englesch with lefee heare from the yeare of 1630 tell the yeare of thurty fouer and tell the yeare of fifte fouer in wich the Kinge of Spaine uesenge all curtyse and given good quartell to all that was upon this Iland, after that came and with oute Recepet upon this Iland knowinge that the Kinge of Spaine had planted upon it and fortified in the name of thye Kinge came the forth time the 15th of August the last yeare French and Fleminges to govern this Iland the same Gouverneore that was heare befor his name was Themeleon hot man De founttana gentleman of the ourder of Guresalem for to take this Iland put if fources by se and land and forsed us to beate him oute of this place with a greate dale of shame, and be cauess yoo shall take notes that wee have puelld doune the Casill and carid all the goneses and have puelld doune all the houes and have lefte no thinge, the same Captane and Sargint-mager in the name of the Kinge wich God blesh hath given yoo notiss that what souer nason souer that shall com to live upon this Iland that thare shall not a man mother or children cape of the sorde, thare fore I give notiss to all pepell that they shall have a care with out anye more notis for this is the order of the Kinge and with out fall you will not want yooer Pamente and this is the furst and second and thorde time, and this whe leave heare for them that comes hear to take notis, that when wee com upon you, you shall not pleate that you dod not know is riten the 25 of August 1656.

Baltesar Calderon
y Espinosa

Por Mandado de Senor Gou^{or}.
Pedro Franco de riva deney xasuss.

⁴⁰ Squads of Spanish lancers who ranged Hispaniola in groups of fifty to destroy the buccaneer hunters and their quarry (see note 23 above).

⁴¹ Rendered by Du Tertre as "Eliazouard" (1667, tom.3, 127).

⁴² Haring, quoting English manuscript material, wrote that du Rausset first removed to Santa Cruz (1910, 117). Charlevoix maintained that he crossed over to the Cul-de-Sac of Hispaniola for a change of air (1733, tom.3, 36-38). In any event, du Rausset ultimately returned to France, and Tortuga remained in his nephew's hands until the arrival of a new governor (Bertram d'Ogeron).

⁴³ According to a manuscript listing of 1663 (printed in Pawson and Buisseret 1975, Appendix 2) there were twenty-two ships of mixed English, French, and Dutch buccaneer crews:

*An Account of the private Ships of Warr belonging
to Jamaica and Turtudos [Tortuga] in 1663
(B.M. Add.MSS. 11410, fo. 10)*

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Guns</i>
Sr. Thos. Wettstone, Comdr. of a Spanish Prize	60	7
Capt. Smart, Comdr. of the <i>Griffon</i> frigott	100	14
Capt. Guy, Comdr. of the <i>James</i> , frigott	90	14
Capt. James, Comdr. of the <i>American</i> frigott	70	6
Capt. Cooper, his frigott	80	10
Capt. Morris, Comdr. of a [brigantine]	60	7
Capt. Brenningham his frigott	70	6
Capt. Mansfield's [brigantine]	60	4
Capt. Goody, a Pincke	60	6
Capt. Blewfield, belonging to Cape Grace Deos living amongst the Indians, a Barke (being manned with English, Dutch and Indians)	50	3
Capt. Hardue, a Frig. Spanish Prize	<u>40</u>	<u>4</u>
11 Ships These 740 men are English, Dutch & French with many more.	<u>740</u>	<u>81</u>

There are 4 more belonging to the Island of
Jamaica which I cannot give an accompt of.

Of Forraigners

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Guns</i>
Capt. Senolve, a Dutchman having 3 small ships full of men from Jamaica which have transported themselves to the River	100	12
(which have left the island)		

*Ships belonging to Turtudos having
the Govrs. Commissions*

Capt. Davis, a Dutch ship & Portugall Comdr.	40	6
A Flyeboate belonging to the Governor of Turtudos, the Captns. name I know not	80	9
	(All French)	
Capt. Buckell, a French frigott	70	8
Capt. Clostree, a French Commission (most Frenchmen)	<u>68</u>	<u>9</u>
	358	44

The grand total for this listing would be 22 ships, 1198 men, and 137 guns. Blewfield (or Blauvelt), whom we found working for the Providence Company years before, was actually Dutch, but like Mansfield (Mansvelt), sailed for the English. This list only includes the larger privateering vessels. With the addition of smaller operators we can surmise a much larger pool of buccaneers.

⁴⁴ The custom of *matelotage* described in note 13 above was just one of many cultural traits which served to bind buccaneer society. In its entirety, the *coutume de la côte* could be thought of as an elaborate code of 'honor among thieves'. At the core of the buccaneers' *modus operandi* was a written contract, or *chasse partie*, mutually agreed upon before every voyage by all of the participants. First to be deducted from the spoil were capital expenses for the expedition--generally 200 pieces of eight to each hunter for supplying provisions, 100 to 150 pieces of eight to the carpenter for fitting out and repairing the ship, and 200 to 250 pieces of eight to the surgeon for medical supplies. Another provision in the initial adjustment was a curious scale of disability compensation insurance for the wounded, payable in pieces of eight or slaves as follows:

<u>lost member</u>	<u>pieces of eight</u>	(or) <u>slaves</u>
right arm	600	6
left arm	500	5
right leg	500	5
left leg	400	4
one eye	100	1
one finger.....	100	1

The remaining plunder was to be equally divided among the crew so that each buccaneer received one full share, exceptions being made for the captain, who received two for his own part (and up to

five or more if he owned the ship), and the boys, who received only half a share each. The share of any buccaneer killed in action was to be added to that of his *matelot*. All plunder had to be contributed toward common disbursement, and each pirate simply swore on the Bible to hold nothing back (though after the raid on Panamá, Morgan violated this customary procedure by forcing an ignominious search of all hands, including himself). Perpetual banishment from the ranks of the Brethren of the Coast was the least penalty for anyone caught breaking this trust.

Though no doubt paramount in their minds, fair division of plunder did not in itself define the buccaneer social code. Loyalty and generosity were expected between Brethren, and when feuds did occur these had to be settled honorably, by the duel. Any buccaneer found to have killed one of his fellows by treachery was set against a tree and shot dead by a comrade of his own choosing. The above procedures described typical buccaneer society on Tortuga in the mid-seventeenth century, as explained by Exquemelin (1972, 58-60; 85), but the Custom of the Coast extended to Jamaica and throughout the West Indies. Similar tenets in Morgan's articles of association were mentioned by Earle (1981, 66-67, 181), and Labat described a nearly identical *chasse partie* among the *flibustiers* of Martinique and other French possessions (1970, 36-37; cf. Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 68-69). Display of bravery constituted another key element in the buccaneer code. Those who performed most daringly and capably against the Spaniards could expect reward in the form extra plunder or increased authority—including captaincy. In the early days of buccaneering, especially, the captain was frequently chosen from the ranks. Aside from an extra share or so of booty, he could expect no special treatment and was obliged to inspire courage by example. As long as his men accepted him as leader, he could rely on them to maintain order and discipline; but even into the latter seventeenth century it was common for disgruntled crewmen to either abandon their captain or elect a new one (Earle 1981, 66-67; Haring 1910, 73). The British historian Peter Earle touted buccaneer society as "the most democratic institution in the world of the seventeenth century" (1981, 66). Fuller and Leslie-Melville described the piratical lifestyle which evolved on Tortuga as essentially communistic (1935, 73). In any event, despite their deserved reputation for fierce independence, the *gens de la côte* demonstrated a remarkable degree of social cohesion and mutual cooperation.

45 The indentured laborer, or bond-servant, often suffered cruel usage from the *habitants* and *boucanier*-hunters; many, like Exquemelin and Le Golif, actually ran off to join the pirates. According to Exquemelin,

the planters admit they must take greater care of a Negro slave than a white bondsman, because the Negro is in their

service for life, while the white man is theirs only for a period... A certain young man of good family... became so desperate he ran off into the forest, where he starved to death. I myself found his body, half eaten by the dogs.

No less memorable is the case of the planter whose bondsman ran off to the woods through ill-treatment, but was fetched back again. His master tied him to a tree, beat him till the blood gushed down his back, then smeared his flesh with a sauce made of lemon juice, salt and red pepper. He was left in this state, tied to the tree, for twenty-four hours. Then the master came back and struck him again, until he died under the blows (1972, 53-54).

⁴⁶ Or so he phrased it, according to Charlevoix. See note 13 above for a fuller discussion of the event.

⁴⁷ Exquemelin, who arrived in Tortuga a year after d'Ogeron took office, remarked of the hunters on Hispaniola that, while once numbering five or six hundred, they were now reduced to less than three hundred. He attributed their thinning numbers to the scarcity of cattle, rather than any efforts of the governor to resettle them (1972, 45).

⁴⁸ Exquemelin's dates are generally unreliable. This one, though possible, seems too early. In the more popular English translation of 1684, which derives from an earlier Spanish translation, no date is given. I have quoted from the only direct English translation of the original text, but have not cross-checked this date with the Dutch publication of 1678. Goslinga (1971, 266) mentioned a Pierre le Grand, "a professional soldier who had distinguished himself in Brazil" as having played a prominent role in the Dutch conquest of Curaçao in 1634, but other than the coincidence of name I have found no evidence for any connection.

⁴⁹ Von Winning (1950) stated that Scot's Campeche maneuver occurred on July 10, 1678, but Burns claimed it took place in 1663, the same year that a Captian Barnard took the fort of San Thomé on the Orinoco River. (1954, 318). John Davis pillaged Granada, and possibly even farther, in 1665 (see note 55 below). Already, however, we noted an earlier land maneuver by French buccaneers in 1659, during Elias Watt's governorship of Tortuga, against the Spaniards at Santiago in Hispaniola. Dampier mentioned a still earlier overland attack by French and English buccaneers, around 1654, against Nueva Segovia via the Río Coco. He claimed to have known several of the buccaneers who had participated in that expedition (1927, 95).

⁵⁰ In 1552 this Spanish soldier-turned-priest published his *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*, in which he

claimed that 15 million Indians had perished at the hands of the Spaniards. The book was translated into Dutch, French, English, Italian, and Latin, and served to fuel the hatred of Spain by her European rivals in what became known as the greatly exaggerated 'Black Legend' (West and Augelli 1976, 66-67).

51 Colorful sobriquets or *noms de guerre* were common among *boucaniers* and *flibustiers* alike. These signified not mere daredevil flamboyancy, but a deeper statement about the nonconformity of the buccaneers to the norms of larger society. According to the French Jesuits, the buccaneers felt entitled to their "*bizarre assemblage*" of antisocial behavior by their rite of passage across the Tropic of Cancer. The traditional sailors' baptism at that line had marked the beginning a new life in the New World, and the buccaneers considered themselves freed of all previous contracts and associations--including their family names. One may never have learned the given name of a buccaneer unless he took a wife and signed it to a marriage contract (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 56-57; cf. Exquemelin 1972, 21-23 for a description of the maritime baptismal ceremony). Some of the more outlandish nicknames were described by the supposed buccaneer Louis Le Golif. His own sobriquet of '*Borgnefesse*'--literally denoting 'one buttock' or 'half-ass'--owed to a posterior wound inflicted by a Spanish cannon at Granada. Borgnefesse took great pains to point out that the ball had first passed between his legs before ricocheting from a rock, assuring the reader that he "never showed anything but [his] face to the enemy" (1954, 35).

52 Exquemelin did not supply a date for the expedition, but both Crouse (1943, 136) and Haring (1910, 156) dated Nau's attack on Maracaibo in 1667, shortly before the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

53 Captain William Jackson is known to have taken the city in 1642 on the same voyage in which he took Trujillo in Honduras and Santiago de la Vega in Jamaica (Haring 1910, 50). Exquemelin mentioned that Maracaibo had fallen to buccaneers ten or twelve years before L'Olonnais' assault, but he was probably referring to Jackson's raid.

54 On this point there is some discrepancy between the English versions of Exquemelin's work. In the first English translation of 1684, which had been rendered from a Spanish translation of the original Dutch, the buccaneers counted 260,000 pieces of eight "in ready money," to which they added shares of silk, plate, and jewels (1987, 99-100). The modern English translation, given directly from the Dutch by Alexis Brown, describes their reckoning of the booty as follows:

They calculated they had 260,000 pieces of eight in ready money, wrought silver and jewels. The silverware was weighed, being reckoned as ten pieces of eight to the pound; they assessed the jewels at various prices, having no exact knowledge of such things. Apart from this, there were at least 100 pieces of eight for every man in linen and silk goods, as well as other trifles (1972, 85).

Pieces of eight, "silver Spanish coins worth eight reales that were often cut into pieces to make small change," provided the standard equivalent for estimating the value of plunder (Botting 1978, 26, pictured on p. 27). Rayner Thrower's chapter on the various types of booty acquired by pirates provides even more interesting details about this legendary coin:

In the early days of the New World there is frequent mention of pieces of eight. A piece of eight was a silver coin worth at that time about 25 p. [British pence, or 1/4 pound sterling], but much more today. It got its name because it was an eight-reales piece (half a Spanish peseta) which had an '8' on one side and an 'R' on the other. Twelve-and-a-half pieces of eight was the value of a doubloon, a gold coin naturally more sought-after. The modern sign \$ is derived from the \$ sign used by pirates to signify the eight-reales coin, which itself may be regarded as the forerunner of the existing dollar monetary system. This provides a further example of how ruffians left their mark on world history (1980, 66).

To lend some idea of the relative worth of such booty, historian Peter Earle pointed out that in the world of the seventeenth-century buccaneer, an average worker was fortunate if he earned 15 pounds--or 60 pieces of eight--in a full year (1981, 23). David Mitchell estimated in 1975 that a piece of eight would be equivalent by modern standards to about £2.50-£3, or \$6-\$7 (1976, 22n).

⁵⁵ Exquemelin described the Davis venture in some detail, mentioning plunder exceeding 40,000 pieces of eight, but gave no date (1972, 69-70). Gerhard cited a Spanish source which dated an attack by "Juan Davis" against Granada, León, and Realejo in June of 1665 (1960, 137-38, 138n). This was the first time Granada had been plundered since its founding a century and a half before (Williams 1976, 51), and if Davis indeed reached Realejo, on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, it was one of the earliest buccaneer incursions to the South Sea. Cruikshank showed that Davis fitted out his ship and crew with Frenchmen from Tortuga (see note 43 above), and it is not inconceivable that L'Olonnais was among these, for he certainly emulated Davis' tactics. A contemporary English account describes apparently the same sacking of Granada in connection with Captains

Jackman, John Morris, and Henry Morgan, as the grand finale to their Central American campaign. According to this deposition, delivered by those captains in November of 1665 to Governor Modyford in Jamaica, some of the buccaneers returned with Captain Martin, a Dutchman, to Tortuga (*C.S.P., America & West Indies*, No.1142, reproduced in Cruikshank 1935, 57-58).

56 The Gulf of Batabanó, separating Cuba from the Isle of Pines (Isla de Juventud).

57 Rendered Rio Xagua by Exquemelin (1972, 86). Here, in search of food, which they found in the form of maize and livestock, the buccaneers raided the abodes of the Indians.

58 Or Puerto Cavallo, the site of modern Puerto Cortés, just north of San Pedro Sula.

59 Exquemelin also spelled his name Moise van Klijn. Roberts (1942, 63) referred to him as Moïse Vauclin, probably after a French translation of Exquemelin.

60 Although these islands were not mentioned by name, Exquemelin wrote "the buccaneers crossed over to some islands on the other side of the Gulf in order to careen their ships and seek fresh food supplies" (1972, 89). Davidson identified these as the Bay Islands, a popular resort for pirates, which offered the best rendezvous for careening in the area (1974, 40, 52-53).

61 Though Exquemelin mentioned the Islas Perlas by name, the two islands he described may well have been the Corn Islands.

62 His name survives among the general public, at least in connection with a popular brand of spiced rum.

63 See, for example, Gosse (1924, 203), Hamshere (1972, 81), and Roberts (1942, 62). Gosse claimed that Mansvelt was a Dutchman born on Curaçao, but that island was not conquered by the Netherlands until 1634 and, given the buccaneer's advanced years, the assertion remains dubious; Gosse's avowal was probably based on Masefield's speculation to the same effect (1922, 106). Kemp and Lloyd referred to Edward Mansfield "whom Esquemeling calls a 'Scot' of the name of Mansvelt" (1960, 14), but I have found no such designation in the editions of Exquemelin available to me. Burney simply stated, "Of what country Mansvelt was a native does not appear" (1891, 64). A Mansfield is mentioned as having taken part in William Jackson's cruise of 1642-45 (Harlow, ed. [Jackson] 1923, 4); Jackson certainly had connections with Providence Island's buccaneers as well as Dutch privateers from Curaçao.

64 Both his name and Blauvelt's appear on a roster of English privateers from Jamaica and Tortuga as of that date--see note 43 above.

65 The best accounts of Mansvelt and Morgan, fully supported from a variety of contemporary documents, both Spanish and English, were put forth by historians Cruikshank (1935) and Earle (1981).

66 Exquemelin (1972, 98) noted that the fleet "consisted of fifteen vessels, with 500 men, including Walloons and Frenchmen, on board." He also claimed that Mansvelt chose young Henry Morgan, at this time aged 30, to be his vice-admiral. Morgan had indeed just returned to Jamaica from successful buccaneering raids with Captains Jackman and Morris in Campeche and Central America, but, according to Cruikshank, there is no credible documentation of his having sailed as a privateer during the next two years (1935, 66).

67 According to Cruikshank, "Mansfield's followers are said to have numbered six hundred men of several nationalities, speaking different languages, as among them, besides many English, there were Flemings, French, Genoese, Greeks, Levantines, Portuguese, Indians, and negroes. Chief among his officers were named John Davis, Joseph Bradley, and the Frenchman, Jean Le Maire" (1935, 67).

68 The coincidence of ruthless piracy with religious piety is always a little baffling. For Protestant corsairs, from Elizabethans to Puritans, Lutherans and Huguenots, anti-Catholicism obviously intensified aggressive motives against the Spaniards. The tendency to mix depredation with devotion among the Catholic French buccaneers, who professed the very faith as their Spanish victims, seems much more incongruous. But in his journal, Père Labat described many such instances among the *filibustiers* of the Antilles:

St. Pierre [Martinique], 6th March 1694. We were busy all this morning confessing a crew of filibusters who had arrived at Les Mouillages with two prizes... The Mass of the Virgin was celebrated with all solemnity, and I blessed three large loaves which were presented by the captain and his officers, who arrived at the church accompanied by the drums and trumpets of their corvette. At the beginning of Mass the corvette fired a salute with all her cannons. At the Elevation of the Holy Sacrament she fired another salvo, at the Benediction a third, and finally a fourth when we sang the Te Deum after Mass. All the filibusters contributed 30 sols to the sacristy, and did so with much piety and modesty. This may surprise people in Europe where filibusters are not credited with possessing much piety, but as a matter of fact they generally give a portion of their

good fortunes to the churches. If church ornaments or church linen happen to be in the prizes they capture, the filibusters always present them to their parish church (1970, 36).

More commonly quoted is Labat's story of the pirate Captain Daniel. After a raid for provisions, this brigand requisitioned the local curé to say Mass aboard his barque. This service was likewise punctuated with cannon fire--with an even more bizarre twist:

One of the pirates adopted an offensive attitude during the Elevation, and on being rebuked by the captain, he replied insolently with a horrible oath. Daniel promptly drew his pistol and shot him through the head and swore by God that he would do the same to anyone else who showed disrespect to the 'Sainte Sacrifice' (222).

Of course, not all buccaneers were especially religious, and as many stories expose their impiety as do their strange devotion.

⁶⁹ A string of tiny islets, or cays, subtends the south coast of Cuba from the Isle of Pines to Cape Cruz. The westernmost group is known as the Archipiélago de los Canarreos, the easternmost as the Jardines de la Reina. William Jackson had also rendezvoused and careened in these cays in 1644.

⁷⁰ Named, as was Bluefields in Nicaragua, after the Dutch pirate-explorer Blauvelt (Newton 1914, 274; Floyd 1967, 19).

⁷¹ The roster for Morgan's fleet has been published in the *Calendar of State Papers (America & West Indies, No. 704, i)*, and was reprinted by Cruikshank as an appendix to his work. By this official account there were 38 ships (eight of them French) and 1846 men (520 of them French), though Earle has suggested the buccaneers must have exceeded 2000 in number (1981, 180). The list of eight French ships belonging to Hispaniola and Tortuga (from Cruikshank 1935, 422) is as follows:

French Ships

<u>Ships' Names</u>	<u>Commanders' Names</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Guns</u>	<u>Men</u>
<i>St. Catherine</i>	Captain Tribetor	100	14	110
<i>Galliardena</i>	" Gascoone	80	10	80
<i>St. John</i>	" Diego	80	10	80
<i>St. Peter</i>	" Pearse Hantol	80	10	90
<i>Le Diable Volant</i>	" Desnangla	40	6	50
<i>Le Serfe sloop</i>	" Joseph	25	2	40
<i>Le Lyon sloop</i>	" Charles	30	3	40

<i>Le St. Marie</i>	"	John Linaux	<u>30</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>30</u>
			465	59	520

72 D'Ogeron's count of 100 *boucaniers* referred only to the environs of the *Cul-de-Sac* of Hispaniola. The estimate of 1000 *flibustiers* was actually stated some years later by d'Ogeron's nephew and successor, de Pouancey (Vaissière 1909, 19-20).

73 According to Exquemelin, only a mock battle ensued, by request of the Spaniards, as a measure to preserve their reputation (1972, 146-47).

74 Exquemelin's less-than-flattering description of Morgan's personal role in the sacking of Panamá has been attributed by some historians as 'sour grapes' with respect to the division of spoil. The buccaneer-author did unjustly accuse Morgan of setting fire to Panamá, a deed which the Spaniards themselves accomplished, and his avowal of Morgan's cruel usage of the Panamanian women and other prisoners is also questionable on the basis of Browne's testimony (see Cruikshank 1935, 196).

75 In an effort to appease the Spanish Court, King Charles II had both Modyford and Morgan arrested and brought to England. Both were soon released, and Morgan eventually returned to Jamaica as Deputy Governor, later becoming Lieutenant Governor of the island. He was also knighted for his service. As a government official, Morgan was constrained to suppress piracy, but apparently he maintained unofficial connections with practitioners of his former trade. Governor Lord Vaughan accused his lieutenant of recommending outlawed buccaneers to the French governor of Tortuga and retaining a personal interest in their purchases (Cruikshank 1935, 237).

76 Cap François, or modern Cap-Haïtien.

77 Raveneau de Lussan, the French buccaneer who published a journal of his isthmian crossing and depredations against the Spaniards in Pacific waters, certainly indicated as much. A party of French and English pirates, he recounted, stopped at Tortuga in 1682 to raid a Dutch vessel lading salt there. De Lussan himself, sailing under Laurens de Graff from Petit-Goâve in December of 1684, anchored briefly off Tortuga to take on water (1930, 41, 69).

78 Meaning 'Coast of Iron'.

79 Louis Le Golif, supposedly a buccaneer who arrived at Tortuga under d'Ogeron's administration, described a surprise assault from the north coast, but that account appears erroneous on multiple counts. The story, nevertheless, was as follows. Le Golif, the

reader may recall, decribed a long-time *habitant* by the name of Piédouille, who, like the more unfortunate Bedel mentioned by Du Tertre, treacherously worked against the *Chevalier* de Fontenay's defense of Tortuga against the Spanish attack of 1654. After the French capitulation and withdrawal, it seems this Piédouille remained in good graces with the Spaniards. However, some years later, or so claimed Le Golif:

Monsieur du Rossey, at the head of more than five hundred *boucaniers* and filibusters, returned to retake Tortuga from the Spaniards. Monsieur Piédouille, who was never slow in turning his coat, betrayed the latter, even as he had betrayed the French. He appeared to be the most enraged of all against the enemy. *It was he who guided the adventurers who landed on the reputedly inaccessible north coast and made them cross the whole island, through forests and over mountains, so as to surprise the Spaniards from the side whence they expected no one* (1954, 29-30 [emphasis added]).

Le Golif was referring to the arrival of du Rausset in 1660. But du Rausset, we know, came with the consent of England at the head of only thirty Frenchmen to wrest the island not from the Spaniards, but from the Englishman Elias Watts. The questionable authenticity of Le Golif's memoirs is considered in Burg's bibliographic essay (1984). The French Jesuits, who provided the account substantially accepted by historians, never mentioned any attack from the north coast (Charlevoix 1733, tom.3, 36-38). Considering the narrow width of the island and the relatively low elevation of its mountain spine, it is a little surprising if no such attempt was ever made, unless of course the *Côte de Fer* was truly inaccessible to craft of that day. Exquemelin, in a seemingly confused relation of de Fontenay's defense against Valle-Figueroa's attack of 1654, mentioned that a combined force of *boucaniers* and *flibustiers* rallied to the *Chevalier*'s aid, climbed the *north* face of the island's mountain, and overtook the Spanish battery from the rear. He did not, however, specify the location of their supposed clandestine landing (1972, 27).

80 Literally, the French equivalent of 'road' in the nautical sense.

81 For those geologically inclined, the *Atlas d'Haïti* provides a much more scientific description of these "rocks": Tortuga's north face consists mainly of Quaternary limestone reefs superimposed in terraces. Metamorphic green schists and marbles predominate in the southwest portion of the island, while calc-silicates (skarns) compose much of the southeastern quarter (Centre d'Etudes de Géographie Tropicale et Université de Bordeaux 1985).

82 More commonly called *lignum vitae*, an extremely durable, tropical American wood of the genus *Guaiacum*. *G. sanctum* would have been particularly suitable for making nautical equipment such as pulley blocks. The translator of the first English edition of Exquemelin, besides clarifying the identity of this tree, interjected another interesting use for it:

Here also grows *lignum sanctum*, by others called *guaiacum*, the virtues of which are very well known, more especially unto them who observe not the sixth Commandment and are given to all manner of impure copulations, physicians drawing from hence, under several compositions, the greatest antidote for all venereal diseases, as also for cold and vicious humours (1987, 15).

83 Gum elemi, a resinous excretion from various trees, was used to manufacture perfumes, ointments, and varnish.

84 Like sarsaparilla, China root described a tuber belonging to various species of the genus *Smilax*, once supposed to soothe gout and purify the blood (cf. Exquemelin 1987, 31n).

85 Exquemelin described in detail the local techniques for cultivating and preparing these crops (1972, 50-51).

86 In view of its former military importance, it is very surprising that few early maps of Tortuga, at least of any appreciable scale, seem to have survived. In fact, aside from the anonymous engraving published in the 1688 French translation of Exquemelin, and the harbor chart and profiles which appeared in *The English Pilot* of Fisher and Thornton in 1689, I have found no other detailed maps--published or manuscript--even remotely contemporary with Tortuga's buccaneers.

With the aid of Rear-Admiral Ritchie, formerly the British Naval Hydrographer and an avid map collector, Rayner Thrower located a map of Tortuga which he reproduced in his 1980 volume, *The Pirate Picture* (Illustration 10 in that volume--see also his discussion on p. 137). Though he claimed this map dated from 1650, no date appears on the portion he reproduced, and he offered no further details about its source. This map, save for a few acutely minor variations, is virtually identical to the engraving in Exquemelin (1688), and there are good reasons to question its compilation, at any rate, before 1665. Above all, the depiction of *la Tour* or *le Fort neuf*, near Cayone, if indeed that structure was built under d'Ogeron's administration (a point discussed further in this study), would necessarily postdate the cartography after 1665. The map is clearly French, but Du Tertre certainly had no knowledge of it as late as 1667. Moreover, the prominent depiction of Cap Sterre and la Pointe au Maçon--two settlements mentioned by Charlevoix but not

by Exquemelin--may suggest compilation even after the buccaneer's original Dutch edition appeared in 1678. In any event, both maps represent essentially one and the same compilation. The map's dimensions appear quite accurate. By its own scale, Tortuga measures 7.5 leagues across and about 2 leagues wide; and given three miles to the league, these measurements are very close to the actual distances already described (25 miles by 5 miles). The harbor, however, is indented much more than modern maps indicate.

Surely other seventeenth-century maps must exist, probably in manuscript form, and these may eventually be uncovered from the French, Haitian, or Spanish-colonial archives. Modern large-scale coverage of Tortuga is obtainable enough. A detailed survey was performed by the ship *Eagle* in 1905/1906, and a 1:200,000 scale map was produced by the Institut Haitien de Statistique (Joseph Charles, cartographer) in 1953. Topographic coverage at the 1:50,000 scale of Tortuga and the adjacent coast of Hispaniola, unfortunately divided among four sheets, is available from the Haitian *Institut de Géodesie et Cartographie* (Series E732, Sheets 5675 I, 5675 IV, 5676 II, and 5676 III). Of particular interest on modern maps are place names which evoke the island's buccaneering past. In addition to Basse Terre and Cayenne (or Cayenne), there is Boucan Guêpes on the south coast. The drier western tip, alternately labeled Pointe Ouest or Pointe Saline, may have been of particular interest to the seventeenth-century Dutch salt collectors; de Lussan mentioned these as still coming annually to Tortuga for salt as late as 1682 (1930, 69). In his short work about piracy in the Gulf of Mexico, Santiago Cruz (1962, 120) published a sketch-map of Tortuga, evidently derived from a modern chart and labeled toward the western end, at the terminus of the path which leads from the port to Palmiste and past Mentrée, with the intriguing word *Tesoro*...

87 A place just east of Port de Paix, almost directly across the Tortuga Channel from Cayenne, is still known as Carénage. Exquemelin mentioned that when meat was required to provision a voyage, the buccaneers often combined hunting with ship repairs: "Some of them go with the hunter to help smoke and salt the flesh, while others stay on board to get the vessel shipshape--careening and greasing and doing all that is necessary" (1972, 58). Hispaniola offered many suitable hideaways, such as Port-Margot, where meat for the voyage and tallow for waterproofing the hulls were quite plentiful. The local tidal pattern of the Tortuga Channel was most convenient for careening, and such maintenance doubtlessly occurred regularly on both sides of it (Thrower 1980, 136).

88 Du Tertre did not specify whether the sketch "*que Monsieur Hotman a pris la peine de le tracer luy-mesme*" was drawn by the father or the brother of de Fontenay. The latter, of course, had on Tortuga attempted to hold the fort with the *Chevalier* and would have been

personally acquainted with its construction; but Du Tertre mentioned that he owed his information about the island's dimensions to "*Monsieur Hotman, pere du Chevalier de Fontenay*" (1667, tom 2, 31)

89 Exquemelin, who arrived on Tortuga more than a decade after Le Vasseur's fortress had been mostly damaged or destroyed, provided a very similar description:

On arrival, this governor had a fortress built on a rock, where it could protect the port from enemy ships. This fort is most difficult of access; it can be approached from one side only, by a way so narrow that no more than two people can enter at the same time. In the middle of the rock is a cave which serves as storehouse for ammunition, and on top is a suitable site for raising a battery. The governor had a house built at the fort, and mounted two guns there, reached by climbing a ladder, which could be pulled up behind. Inside the fort is a spring of sweet water, fit to supply a thousand people daily--a supply which cannot be cut off, for it gushes out of the rocks. All around the fort are plantations, which are very rich in tobacco and other crops (1972, 26).

Judging from the island's geology (see note 81 above), the *Fort de la Roche* was likely hewn from calcic material--either limestone or metamorphic skarn--which would account for the cave described by Exquemelin and Du Tertre.

90 Labat pointed out that the site of the small English battery had been no better than its mountings, and that the location of Le Vasseur's fort afforded much better command (1925, 18-19).

91 A. Hyatt Verrill's *In the Wake of the Buccaneers* (1923), though not a documented scholarly work, is delightful reading and one of the few field-based attempts I know of to reconstruct piracy geographically. If the title of my own work owes even in part to that author's literary sense, I gratefully acknowledge my debt.

92 Enthusiastic pirate studies by physicians such as Dr. Philip Gosse and Dr. Rayner Thrower reflect a certain poetic justice. The ship's surgeon was an indispensable member of the pirate crew, and probably the best educated. Consequently, much of our present knowledge of pirate life owes to the literate accounts of *chirurgeons*--as the buccaneers called their doctors--particularly the chronicles of Exquemelin, Lionel Wafer, and Richard Browne. D. McDonald published an informative exposé about pirate-physicians in his article, "Surgeons to the Buccaneers: The Doctor as Pirate" (1956).

93 The banyan or Bo Tree (*Ficus benghalensis*) is indigenous to India. As a sacred symbol of Buddhism, it has diffused as far as Japan and China, but it not likely that this particular species would be found in the jungles of Tortuga. Mr. Hoover probably witnessed a similar species of *Ficus*.

94 Meaning 'The Farting Rat'.

Chapter 4

PIRATES AND EXPLORATION IN THE NEW WORLD

He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.

--Lord Byron
The Corsair
(Canto III St.24)

Pirate Geographers

In the foregoing chapters, wherever it proved feasible and illustrative, I allowed pirates to tell their own stories about places and events they witnessed against the broad new horizons of Spanish America. We followed them to lands and seas never before seen by their own countrymen, occasionally to areas hitherto unknown even to the Spaniard. We excerpted from their journals vivid descriptions of exotic locales, even a few maps, but we have only scratched away at the vast store of geographical knowledge contained therein. When the average person thinks about pirates in connection with cartography, a wonderful vision appears. It is, of course, a grimy, ragged parchment crudely sketched with prominent landmarks and a bold **X** indicating precisely the location of buried treasure. Likewise most people, were they to imagine the contents of a pirate's journal, would conjure up something akin to the entry reputedly from Blackbeard's log (but more likely drawn from the fertile imagination of Daniel Defoe):

Such a day, rum all out:--Our company somewhat sober:--A damn'd confusion amongst us!--Rogues a-plotting:--Great talk of separation--so I looked sharp for a prize:--Such a day took one, with a great deal of liquor on board, so kept the company hot, damned hot; then all things went well again (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 33).

The true nature of the pirates' geographical contribution is regrettably less sensational. Its actual value, however, has proved far greater and far more enduring than any fabled treasure on tattered charts which may be buried deep in the public psyche.

It should require no great leap of imagination to view pirates not merely as thieves and cutthroats--though these they certainly

were--but also as prime agents in the processes of discovery, exploration, and the advancement of geographical knowledge. I am by no means the first to make this observation. Several years ago, in her article about piracy's imprint on the Caribbean, Nell Clarke remarked that "privateers and pirates...though they turned this body of water into a veritable Spanish cockpit, at the same time discovered lands, developed the art of seamanship, and added greatly to the world's knowledge of natural history and geography" (1922, 147). I would take that idea one step farther and contend, in short, that pirates were geographers. Never, at least to my knowledge, did they apply that label to themselves; nor did any of their contemporaries so describe them, but in those days that title was not so common as it is now.

I do not mean to suggest, of course, that *all* pirates were geographers, for most of them were illiterate, skilled neither in navigation nor cartography, and uninterested in conveying their experiences to posterity. Among this sort one can only imagine what fantastic tales of foreign lands and peoples lavishly unfolded between gulps of rum and brandy, never leaving the confines of a dimly lit public house. Geographers, by contrast, describe the earth for all to see, with maps and written accounts the only proof of their endeavors. Though pirates may have participated one and all in the exploration of the Americas, among their unpolished ranks only a few possessed the abilities and the inclination to record their discoveries. Shining preeminently amidst even this elite corps was William Dampier. His portrait in the National Gallery of London (Figure 13) bears the epithet, "Pirate and Hydrographer."

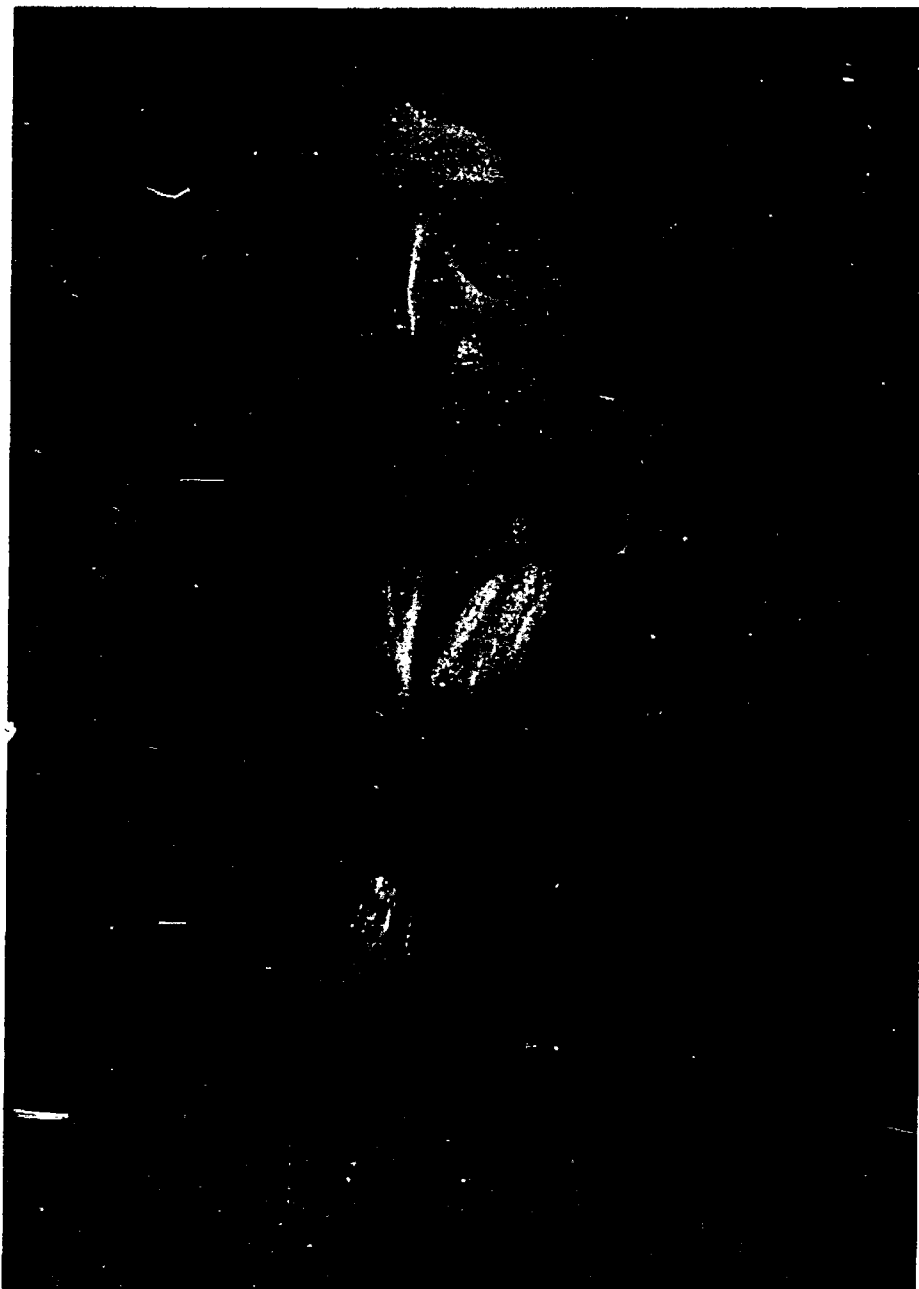


Figure 13: William Dampier--"Pirate and Hydrographer"
(Painting by Thomas Murray in London's National Portrait Gallery)

Dampier was much more than that. Nothing escaped his unquenchable curiosity, and during his long career he meticulously recorded the innumerable species of flora and fauna, the customs of aboriginal peoples, the variation of winds and currents and, of course, the coastlines of every place he encountered. Natural scientist, perhaps, would have best described him in his own day (Lloyd 1966, 14), but his writings are by no means limited to natural occurrences. Only one title is sufficiently broad to encompass his accomplishments, and Dampier, I suspect, would be very pleased to be remembered as a geographer.¹ But we jump too far ahead, for the geographical contributions of the pirates began long before the rise of buccaneers.

Discovery is the initial and most invigorating aspect of geography, and Clinton Edwards (1985) has raised some pertinent questions about the nature of this process. I say process because, as Edwards pointed out, people are prone to think of discovery in terms of a discrete historical event. It is not. Expounding on the ideas of Norman Thrower and Raleigh Skelton, Edwards contended we might derive greater meaning from any given discovery by conceptualizing it rather in a series of qualitative phases. Successive individuals are likely to visit a place before its location and attributes are fully appreciated by a larger public. Hence for any given location there have been "accidental" or "lost" or "ephemeral" discoveries, never recognized as "official" in history books and tourist brochures. Depending on the consequences of a discovery--whether or not, for example, it resulted in conquest and/or colonization--one might further classify it as either

"effective" or "ineffective." The mapping of a new place with enough precision that others can recover it on subsequent expeditions is perhaps the most critical step in discovery, but the entire process remains a gradual one of increasing geographical awareness.

The very notion of discovery within the tradition of Western scholarship is of course entirely Eurocentric. Many of us steeped in this perspective perhaps fail, even subconsciously, to attach sufficient status to a place before its discovery by Europeans. We furthermore tend to speak of 'European Contact' or 'European Discovery' as though these actions manifested the unified will and efforts of a single entity. Of course they did not, and it is for this reason that pirates played such a crucial role in the development of American discovery. New lands and waterways charted by Spain were jealously guarded state secrets of the highest order. In this respect the discoveries of the Spaniards, remarkable though they were, represented only a limited stage in the ongoing and multifaceted diffusion of geographical knowledge.

Pirates, as the vanguard of Spain's colonial rivals, became the leading agents for subsequent phases of discovery and exploration in the New World. Sometimes they earned their findings through agonizing voyages and long periods of deprivation. Sometimes, truer to their profession, they chanced to steal information directly from the Spaniards in the form of charts, rutters, and experienced pilots. When we think of pirate booty, we generally think in terms of gemstones, gold, and pieces of eight. Such treasures were nothing compared to the geographical

intelligence which the pirates and their colonial patrons wrested from the proprietors of the New World. This precious knowledge--these discoveries--represented the ultimate source of Spanish wealth and power. That was the greatest plunder, and that was the real undoing of Spanish America.

Appearing within fifty years of Columbus' famous voyage, the corsairs who launched the challenge to Spain's monopolistic claim in fact collaborated with the Spaniards in an exciting chapter of exploration. Francis Drake, undisputed champion of sixteenth-century piracy, likewise achieved within that profession the greatest fame as navigator and discoverer. Drake in the *Golden Hind*, we recall, was the first to repeat Magellan's circumnavigational feat. He was, moreover, the first commander of any nationality to complete the circuit in one continuous voyage; the geographical awareness effected by this and his other expeditions is no less a credit to his name. The cartographic flurry generated by Drake has been well documented by Mary Keeler (1978) and especially Helen Wallis (1984), but we should begin with particular homage to one of his early associates. If John Hawkins was Drake's piratical mentor, then Guillaume le Testu might well have fostered the arch-pirate's attention to cartographic detail.

Le Testu was the French corsair with whom Drake joined forces before capturing the Panamanian treasure train in 1573. A native of Le Havre, he was also one of the most accomplished hydrographers of his day, contributing greatly to the Arques (or Dieppe) School of portolan-chart making which flourished in the mid-sixteenth century.² In his manuscript atlas, the "Cosmographie Universelle"

(1556-57), he produced seven world maps, each on a different projection, and we may be sure he prepared detailed notes and profiles as he cruised off Nombre de Dios sixteen years later (Tooley 1949, 38; Andrews 1967, 38; Wallis 184, 125). Le Testu was wounded, captured, and beheaded in that campaign and Drake's acquaintance with him was consequently brief; but one can easily imagine the two corsair chieftans huddled over the old Huguenot's charts and profiles in a cramped and musty ship's cabin. On subsequent voyages we know that Drake diligently painted views and profiles of the forbidden coasts he plundered. We also know that he kept a journal to record discoveries during his circumnavigation, and this he presented to Queen Elizabeth upon his return, along with "a very large map" to show "everything that had happened during the three years" (Bernardino de Mendoza [1580], translated by Wallis 1984, 121). His chart, placed in honor beside the world map of Sebastian Cabot in the royal gallery at Whitehall, was apparently consumed by the fire which devastated that palace in 1698.

Its geographical influence, however, resurfaced in many contemporary compilations, including Francois Fletcher's sketches,³ the Drake-Mellon map, and the world map of Nicola van Syde (circa 1583)--"veue et corige par le diot Siegneur draok"⁴ (all reproduced in Wallis 1984). The journal, sadly, was also lost to posterity though we have some idea of its contents. One of Drake's prisoners, the Portuguese pilot Nuño de Silva, testified that "Francis Drake kept a book in which he entered his navigation and in which he delineated birds, trees and sea-lions. He is adept at painting and has with him...a relation [John Drake]...who is a great painter." A

Spanish prisoner, Francisco de Zárata, nervously added: "He also carries painters who paint for him pictures of the coast in its exact colours. This I was most grieved to see, for each thing is so naturally depicted that no one who guides himself according to these paintings can possibly go astray" (both quoted in Willis 1984, 123). Drake extracted much of his geographical information directly from Spanish pilots and sea charts captured in a prize off the Isla del Caño. This purloined knowledge encouraged him to cross the Pacific. During the celebrated West Indies raid of 1585-86, he employed the services of Baptista Boazio as cartographer and possibly as translator for negotiations with the Spaniards.⁵ Boazio's famous maps of that expedition include a general chart showing the fleet's route and more detailed plans depicting the sieges of Santo Domingo, Cartagena, and San Agustín. These latter were published with Walter Bigges' *Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage*, first in Latin and French (1588), and the following year in English (Keeler 1978, 71-80).⁶

Finally, for the fateful voyage of 1595-96, Drake again took pains to engage a painter for recording the precise hydrography of the expedition, and that manuscript survives in the French Bibliothèque Nationale. For reasons of security, and unfortunately for Drake, most of his contributions to geography were suppressed during his own lifetime by the Elizabethan court. His greatest discovery in Spanish America was that Tierra del Fuego constituted not a part of Terra Australis, but rather an archipelago separated from that supposed southernmost continent by an oceanic portal much wider than the Strait of Magellan. Though Drake himself never

ventured through it, the broad passage he observed south of Cape Horn now bears his name (Wallis 1984, 122-57).

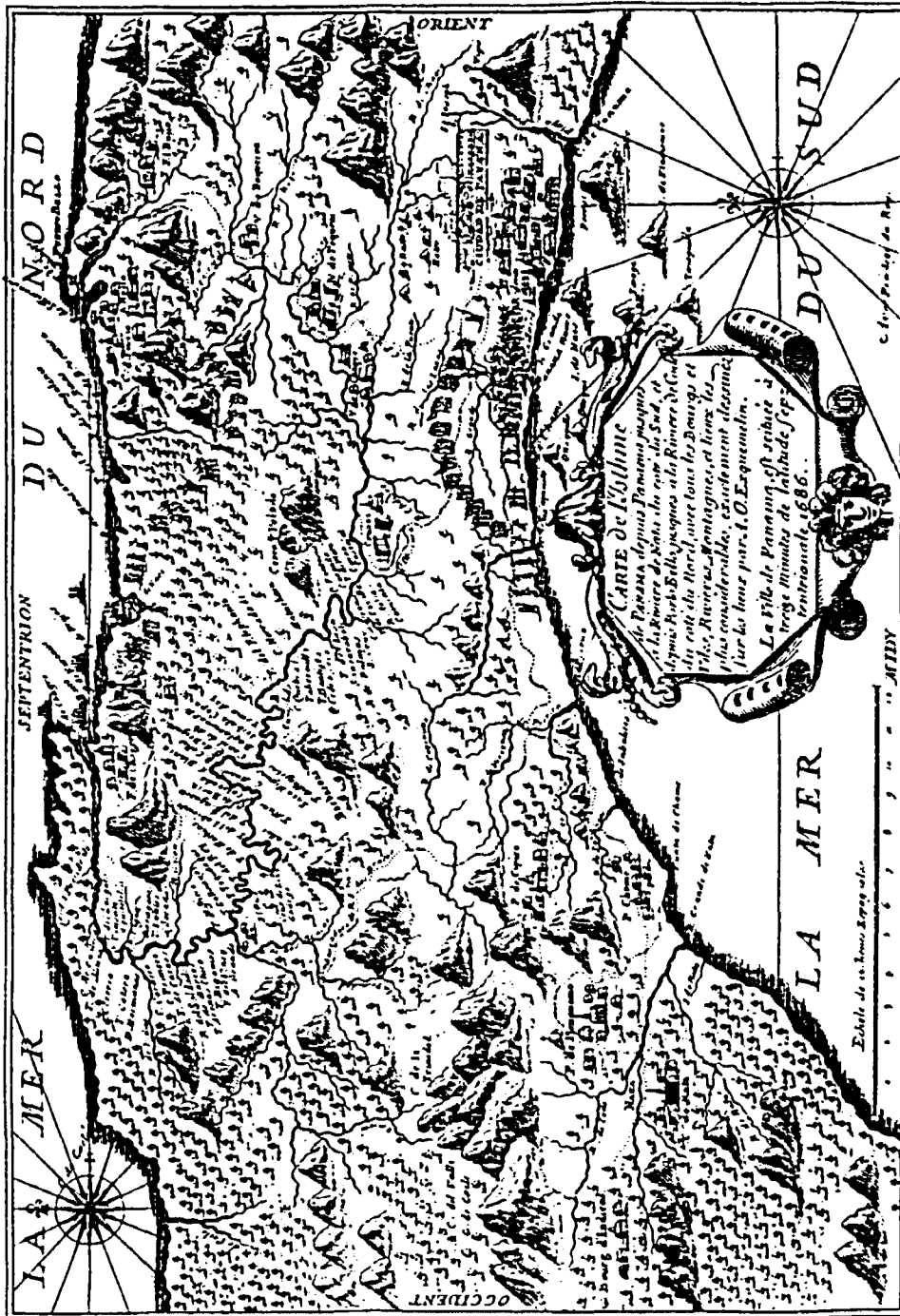
If indeed the most significant act of discovery is charting a place so that others may find it, the consummate reward must be to leave one's name to mark the spot. Drake's was not the only patronymic buoy strewn along the pirates' wake. Already we have steered past several others: Bluefields (Nicaragua) and Bluefields Bay (Jamaica), Watling Island (in the Bahamas), Coxon's Hole (in the Bay Islands), Clipperton Island, the Isla Alejandro Selkirk (of the Juan Fernández group), Jol's Hole (in Belize's Turneffe)--perhaps even Belize itself (from Willis?). To this list of piratical place names we should add Rackham Cay (off Port Royal), Butler's Keys (near Cape Gracias a Dios), La Sound's Key (in the San Blas group), Yallahs Bay and Yallahs Point (Jamaica), Prince Rupert's Bay (Dominica), and no doubt dozens of others.⁷

Toponyms, like discoveries, have not always proved "effective," and pirates' journals are replete with long-ignored, "ephemeral" topographic memorials to themselves. The reader may recall such attempts to create a Sharp's Isle of Gorgona, a Drake's Isle of La Plata, or a Cavendish's Bay opposite the Isla del Caño.⁸ A comprehensive gazetteer of piratical tributes would pose a complicated and interesting agenda for further research, but that is not my intention here. This cursory roster at least suggests the extent to which pirates participated in the discoveries of the New World. One notices something else from this short list: most of the places on it recall the names of seventeenth-century buccaneers. Perhaps that should not surprise us, for unlike the corsairs who

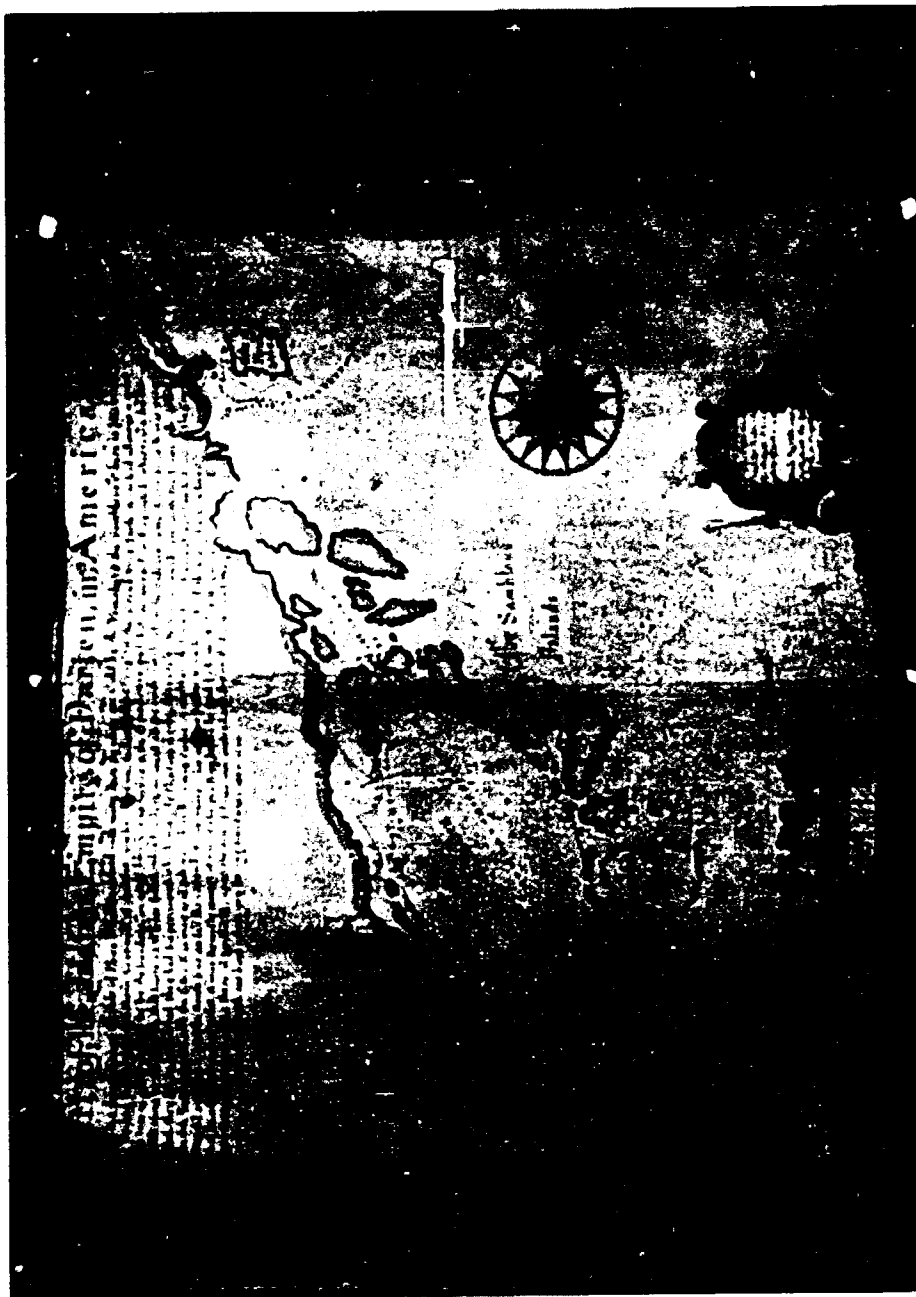
preceded them or the freebooters who came after, these pirates alone attached themselves to the lands they wrested from the Spaniards. Because their stake in the region's geography was likewise greater, the 'Brethren of the Coast' probably derived heightened satisfaction from mapping their adopted habitat.

Maps of the Buccaneers⁹

To my knowledge, the earliest surviving maps by a buccaneer are those of Alexandre Olivier Exquemelin.¹⁰ Probably a Frenchman by birth,¹¹ Exquemelin (Esquemeling or Oexmelin) arrived at Tortuga in 1666, became a surgeon to the buccaneers, and later wrote about their exploits and the lands they visited.¹² His *Buccaneers of America*, including charts of Panama (Map 18) and Maracaibo (Map 14), first appeared as a Dutch publication in 1678 but within eight years was translated into German, Spanish, English, and French.¹³ The tremendous impact of this work in its own day, not just as a thrilling narrative of piracy but also as a geographical key to an exotic New World, was underscored quite succinctly by F. Muller, an expert on Dutch Americana: "no other book of that time...experienced a popularity similar to that of the 'Buccaniers of America'" (quoted in Sabin 1875, vol.6, 310). Exquemelin's map of Panama reproduced here (Map 18) accompanied the first French translation in 1686. In reverse of earlier editions,¹⁴ this engraving is oriented with north at the top, and the South Sea, or Pacific Ocean, at the bottom.

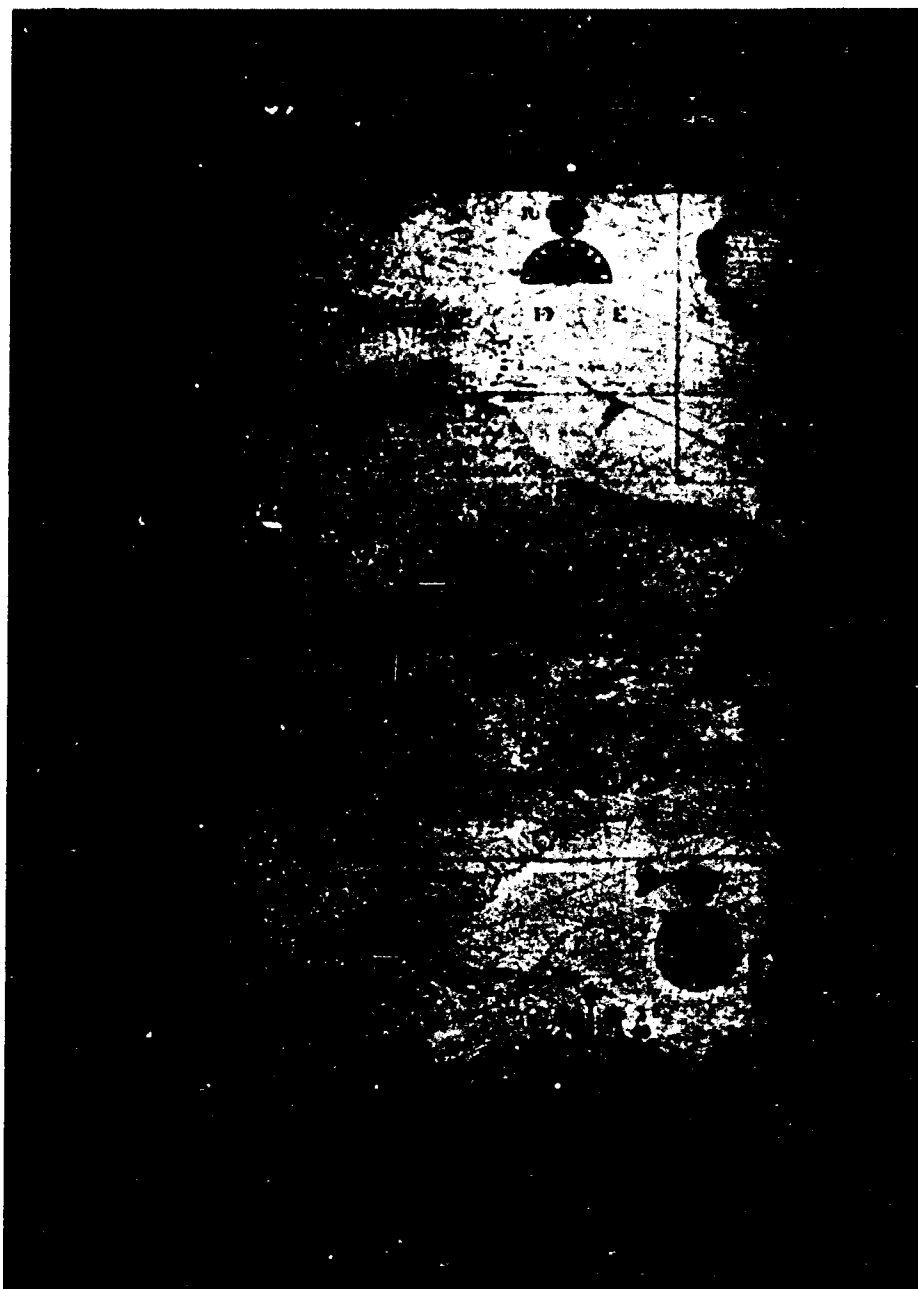


Map 18: Morgan's Route Across Panama as Depicted by Exquemelin



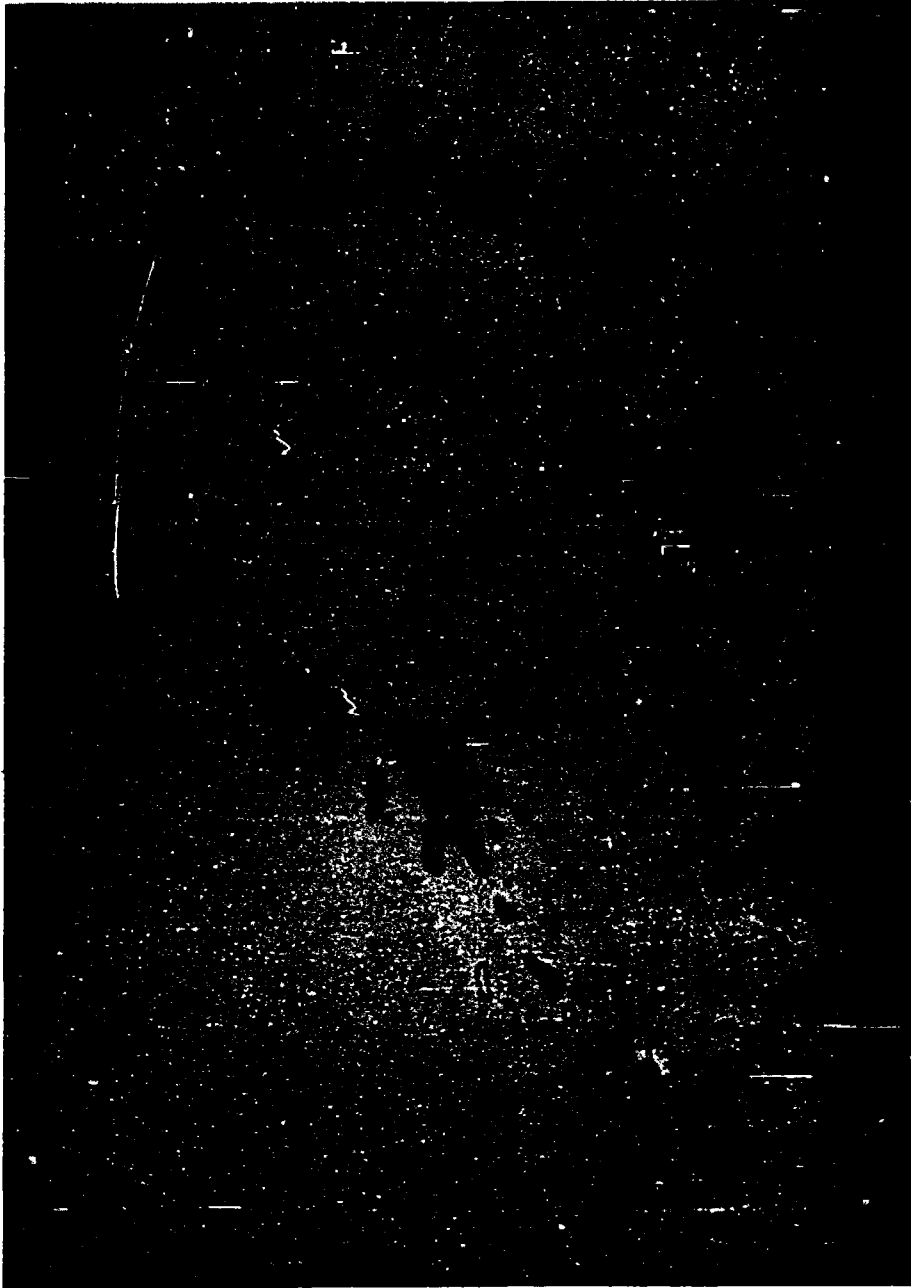
Map 19: "Part of the Indian Empire of Darien in America"---
Manuscript Chart by Willian Hack (1686)

(BL Add. 5415.G.9)



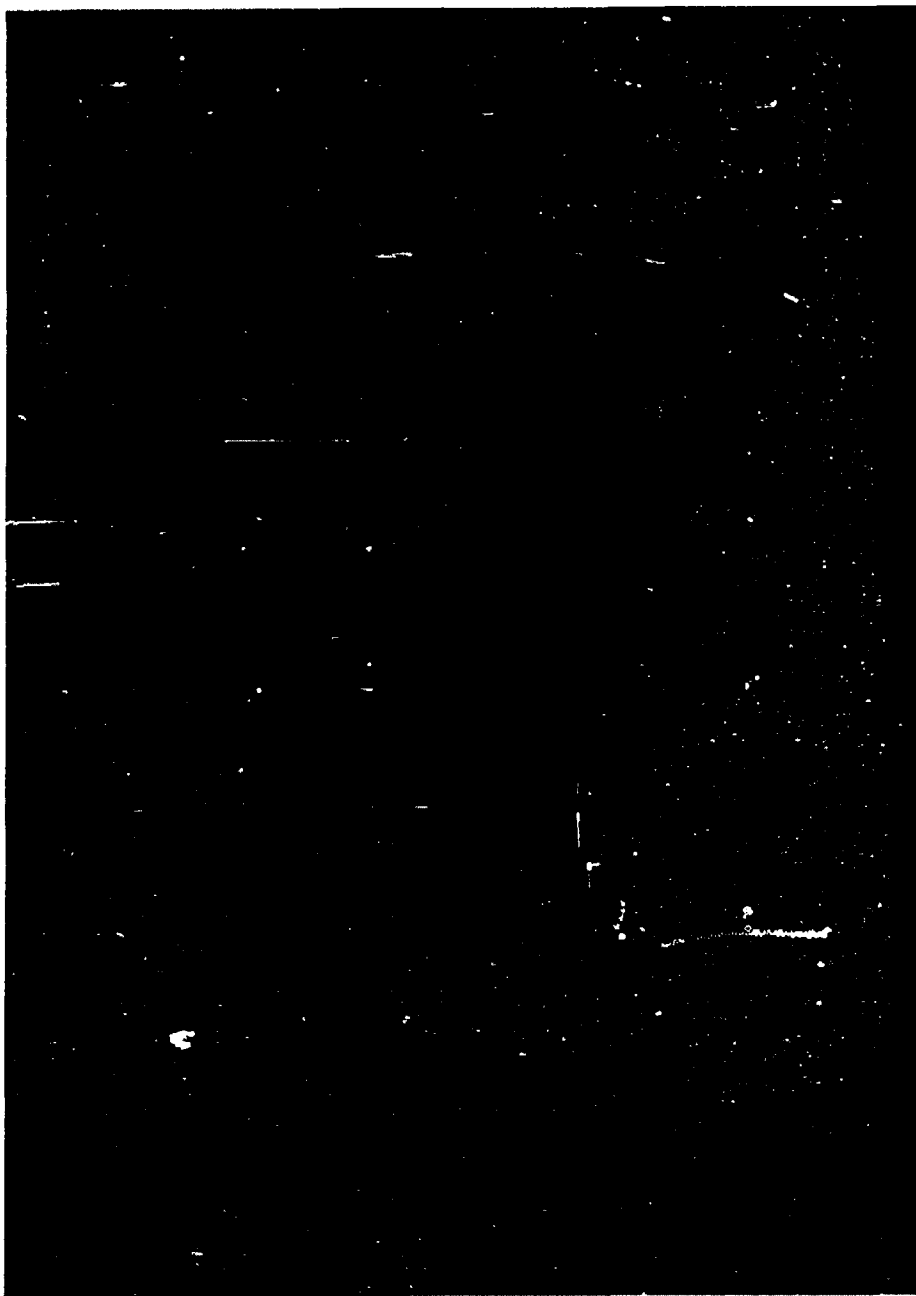
**Map 21: William Hack's Original Manuscript Chart of
Sharp's Voyage Round South America (1682)**

(BL Add.5414.16)



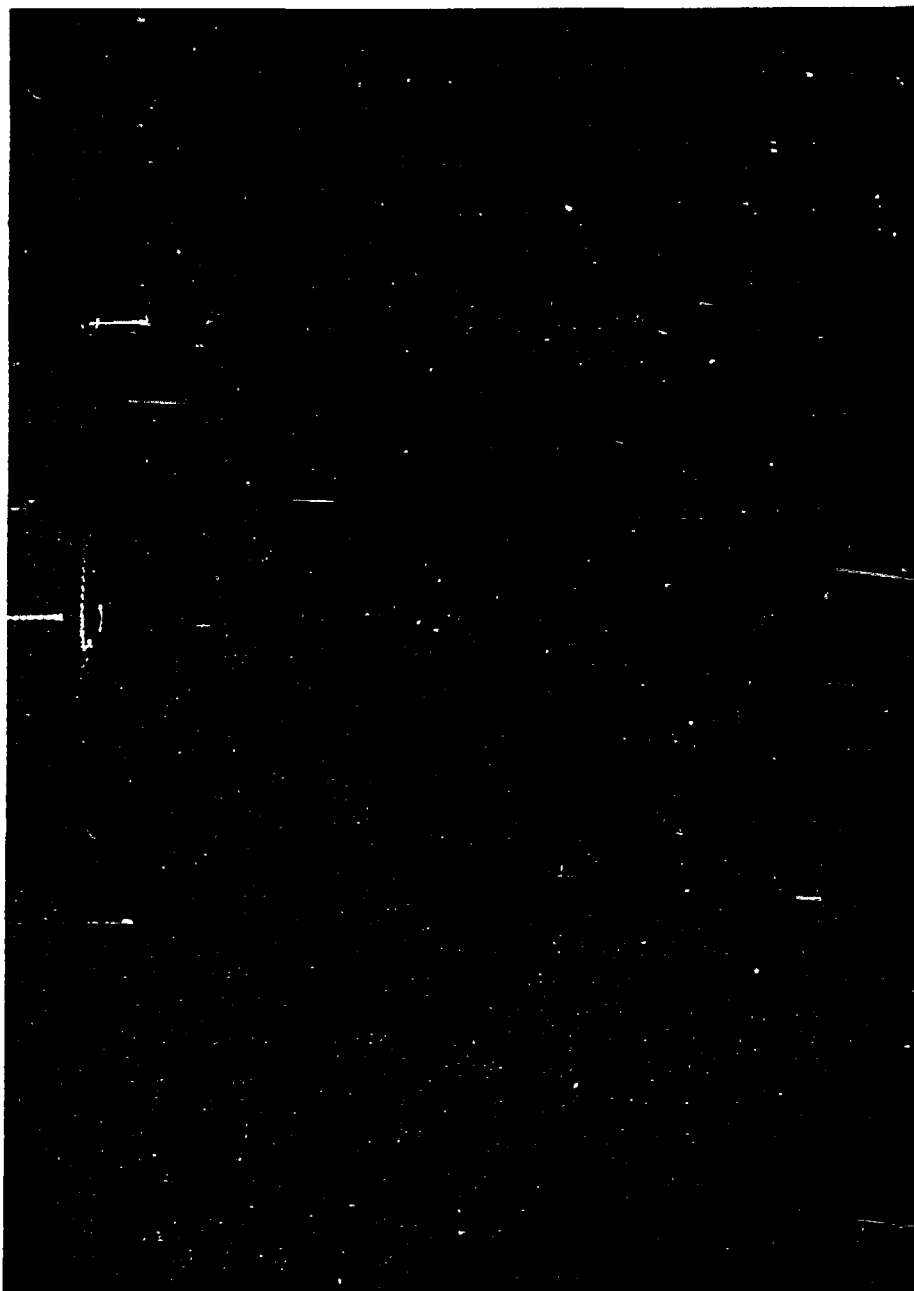
Map 22: Basil Ringrose's Chart of the Bay of Panama

(Copied by William Hack in BL Sl. 48 from Sl. 3820)



Map 23: "The Ground Plot of the City of Serena" by Basil Ringrose

(Copied by William Hack for Sharp's Journal, BL Sl.46.a.)



**Map 24: Sharp's South American Route in a Corrected
Manuscript Version (1686) by William Haack**

(BL S1.44)

On Exquemelin's map the assaults committed by Henry Morgan's buccaneers--the sacking of Porto Bello, the reduction of the Castle of San Lorenzo, the subsequent traverse via the Río Chagre and Venta Cruz to loot the city of Panamá--are all clearly indicated with ships, battle formations, and dotted lines.

In 1680, a decade after Morgan's Panamanian venture, a new force of buccaneers under the command of John Coxon, Bartholomew Sharp, and others mustered on the Darien coast, preparing to emulate Morgan's success. Their landing was later depicted by a London-based copyist and cartographer, William Hack, on a manuscript chart of 1686 (Map 19). After crossing the Isthmus with Cuna Indian guides and raiding the mining depot of Santa Maria en route, the marauders reached the South Sea in April of 1681.¹⁵ Among the rank and file was Basil Ringrose, whose detailed journal has left us the best record of the expedition. The manuscript version (circa 1682) contains several original maps and is housed in the British Library as Sloane MS 3820. It was followed with a more elaborate manuscript copy by William Hack,¹⁶ who also borrowed several of Ringrose's charts to illustrate the journal of Bartholomew Sharp.¹⁷ In 1685 Ringrose's chronicle was published as an appendage to the first English translation of Exquemelin. This printed version includes several maps and profiles quite faithful to the manuscript originals as well as an unsigned map of South and Central America which shows, albeit somewhat inaccurately, where Sharp and his buccaneers ranged up and down the Pacific seaboard in Spanish prizes before rounding Cape Horn (Map 20). No such map appears in Ringrose's manuscript, but a remarkably similar one--containing like coastlines, labeling,

and even the same erroneous extension of Sharp's route to Valdivia-- had been produced by William Hack in 1682 and may well have provided the source (Map 21).¹⁸

The appearance of Sharp and his companions in the South Sea signaled the first English intrusion into those waters since the raids of Drake and Cavendish a century before, and Ringrose carefully recorded their discoveries. Depicting their movements in the Bay of Panama, Hack's copy of the Ringrose manuscript shows the track of canoes used to capture prizes sizeable enough to permit further roving (Map 22). One of many Spanish settlements then raided was Serena on the Chilean coast, and Ringrose hastily prepared a sketch of the town before his boorish cohorts burned it to the ground. Hack prepared a more ornate copy to accompany Sharp's journal (Map 23) and likewise borrowed Ringrose's outline of Juan Fernández, the remote island where Sharp's gang twice repaired to careen, fetch water, and hunt wild goats (Map 8).¹⁹ It bears repeating that while these and other maps are sometimes attributed to Sharp because of their inclusion by Hack in his journal, the original compiler and draftsman was Basil Ringrose. To my knowledge, if he made any at all, not a single map by Sharp survives.²⁰

Even if Sharp was no cartographer, he was a first-rate mariner. Sharp's expedition, more accurately depicted by Hack in 1684 (Map 24), added an exciting chapter to the annals of exploration; his able navigation guided the first Englishmen around Cape Horn in an impressive voyage which encompassed the whole of South America. As a buccaneering venture it proved considerably

less successful. Booty was minimal; casualties were high; and the cruise was plagued by hunger, sickness, four changes in command, and desertion by three sizeable contingents of malcontents. The last of these, returning across Panama on foot, included two remarkable buccaneers, Lionel Wafer and William Dampier.

Wafer's fascinating account of his life among the Darien natives,²¹ with whom he remained several months owing to an injury, was published in 1699. In addition to valuable information about the Cuna Indians who befriended him, it included a detailed map of Panama. Although occasionally attributed to Wafer, the map was actually the work of his brother-in-arms, William Dampier,²² and the latter's South Sea roving with Sharp's crew and his overland retreat along the Rio Congo are indicated on the chart with a dotted line. Once across the Isthmus, Dampier engaged in a series of eventful voyages by which he circumnavigated the world and returned to his native England. There he published in 1697 the landmark narrative of his travels which contained, among other compilations, his chart "of the Isthmus of Darien and the Bay of Panama" (Map 25).²³ Dampier was an extraordinary man, the only buccaneer better known for his contributions to science than for his crimes against the Spaniard.²⁴ In the preface to his *New Voyage Round the World* he took pains to introduce the work as a geographical treatise rather than a record of buccaneer exploits:

As for the Actions of the Company among whom I made the greatest part of this Voyage, a Thread of which I have carried thro' it, 'tis not to divert the Reader...that I mention them, much less that I take any pleasure in relating them: but for method's sake, and for the Reader's satisfaction; who could not so well acquiesce in my

Description of Places, &c. without knowing the particular Traverses I made among them (1927, 3).

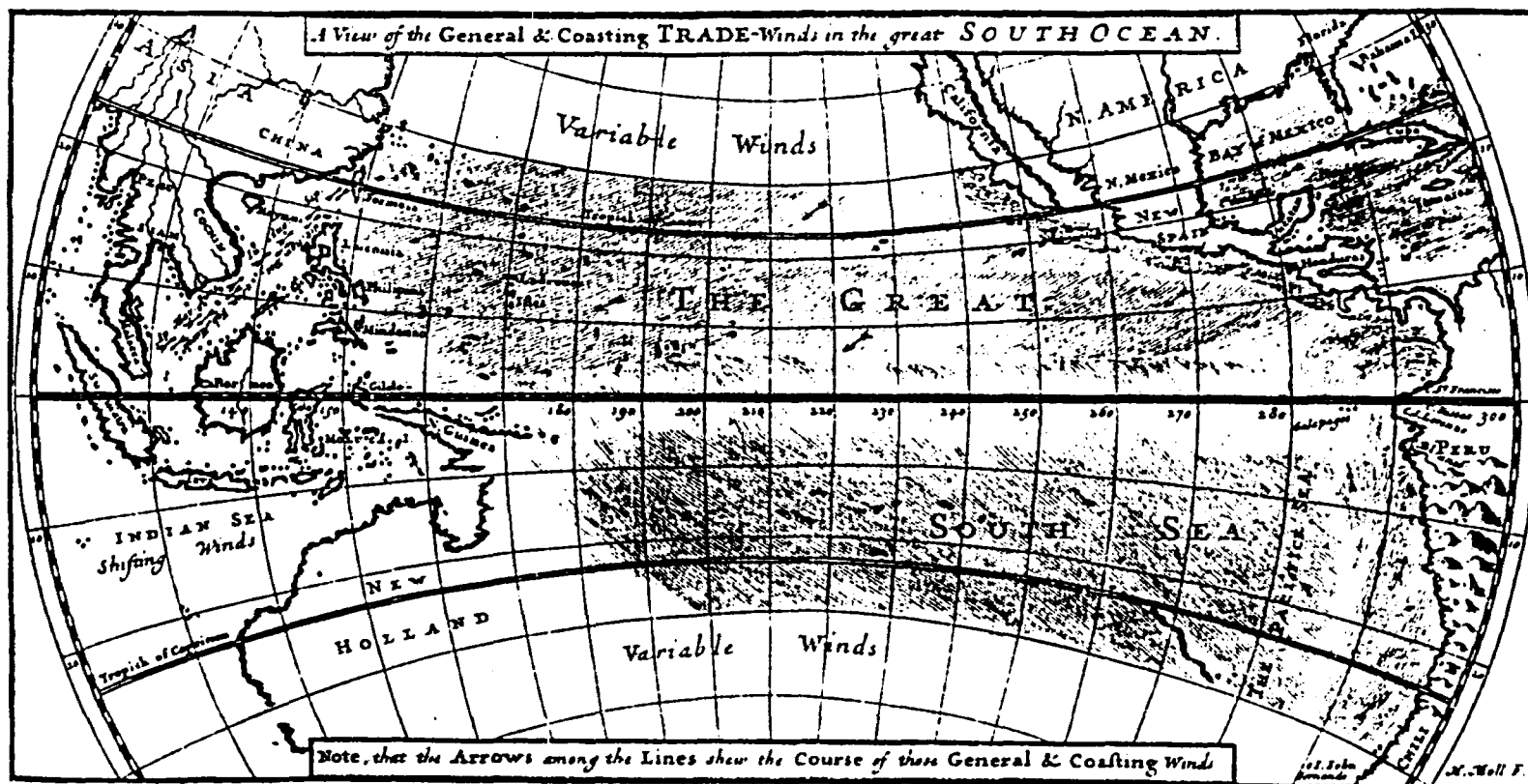
Dampier, of course, had more practical reasons for distancing himself as much as possible from his piratical brethren, but one senses in his writings a true distaste for their methods and an overriding desire to see the world. In the course of his long career at sea, he circumnavigated the globe three times and led the first English expedition to Australia. All the while he maintained a detailed journal, kept safe from the elements in a bamboo tube stoppered with wax, in which he described the plants, animals, people, and places he encountered. The immense success of his first book prompted Dampier to publish a record of his previous adventures.

First appearing in 1699, Dampier's *Voyages and Discoveries* included an entertaining description of earlier sojourns among the buccaneer-woodsmen of "Campeachy" and a map, engraved by Herman Moll, of their haunts along the Laguna de Términos (Map 10). Dampier, fascinated by all natural phenomena, held particular interest as a mariner in the variation of winds. His treatise on the subject, *A Discourse of Trade-Winds*,²⁵ contains a pair of charts, also engraved by Moll, which demonstrate with fair accuracy the prevailing wind patterns over the Atlantic and Pacific tropics. His innovative Pacific chart (Map 26) depicted wind belts never before revealed on paper, even by the great Edmund Halley. Probably the only thematic maps ever devised by a pirate, Dampier's wind charts indicate surface wind directions with line shading and arrows, even illustrating the seasonal reversal of the Asian monsoons (Shipman 1962, 8-12).



Map 25: Dampier's Chart of the Isthmus of Panama (1697)

(reprinted in Kapp 1971b)



Map 26: "A View of the General & Coasting TRADE-Winds in the Great SOUTH OCEAN" by William Dampier (1699)

(Reprinted 1729)



Map 27: "A Description of Mr. Secretarie Peyppes Island"--the Falklands

(Drawn by William Hack in 1687 from Ambrose Cowley's survey. BL Sl. 45)

Not all of the information generated by pirates contributed positively to geographical knowledge. Among Dampier's associates was another circumnavigator, William Ambrose Cowley, whose early description of the Falkland Islands, taken from a buccaneering voyage round Cape Horn in 1684, resulted in a cartographic error perpetuated for over a century. Cowley's draft of the islands provided the basis for a chart made in 1687 by William Hack (Map 27). To his credit, Cowley in the manuscript copy of his journal only underestimated the latitude of the islands. He correctly identified them, however, as the Sebald de Weerts (i.e. the Falklands), already visited by previous explorers.²⁶ Nevertheless, an ambitious William Hack, eager to attract influential patrons, advertised the islands as a new and separate discovery named after no less a personage than famed diarist Samuel Pepys, then Secretary of the Admiralty. On the 1687 manuscript world map by which Hack illustrated Cowley's circumnavigation, "Pepys^{es} Island" appears in prominent gold leaf at about 47 degrees, while the "Sibbde de Waards" occupy approximately the correct position of the Falklands (Map 28). Hack's deception received much wider circulation after 1699 from his published edition of both maps with Cowley's journal.²⁷ Pepys' Island remained thus depicted on various Admiralty charts even into the early nineteenth century, and ships of the English Navy were still searching for it as late as 1764.²⁸

William Hack has been mentioned repeatedly in connection with the maps and journals of the buccaneers. His working acquaintance with such notorious figures as Cowley, Ringrose, and Sharp, coupled with his self-styled title of "Captain",²⁹ have promoted conjecture

as to whether Hack himself may have sailed as a buccaneer. In *Tooley's Dictionary of Mapmakers*, he is labeled as "Seaman, pirate, and chartmaker;"³⁰ but evidence uncovered by Thomas Smith (1978) and Tony Campbell (1973) suggests otherwise. Smith discovered that William Hack, together with such well known chart makers as Nicholas Comberford and John Thornton, formed part of a distinctive master-apprentice network within London's Worshipful Company of Drapers. These cartographers, having no livery company of their own, practiced and transmitted their craft within the Drapers' Company for over a century. Their work is therefore sufficiently related to qualify as a unique school of cartography, known as the Thames School (because of their waterfront locations) or Drapers' School (because of their patron company).³¹ In 1671, William Hack entered an apprenticeship under Andrew Welch for a minimum term of nine years. This indenture likely precluded any possibility of leading a piratical career before setting up shop for himself (Campbell 1973, 87-88). More likely, the location of Hack's shop near the New Stairs in Wapping, long a resort of London's pirates, occasioned his professional association with the buccaneers.

Hack's charts display several characteristics of the Thames or Drapers' School.³² Drawn on paper or vellum with brightly colored inks and gold-leaf highlights, they are embellished with ornate compass roses and cartouches. A few, including his world chart depicting Cowley's voyage, were mounted in the early Thames-School tradition upon folding wooden panels for safe storage.³³ Some of his works, such as the 1682 map of Jamaica dedicated to "His Honoured and Obliged Friend Capt. Bartholomew Sharpe" (Map 29),

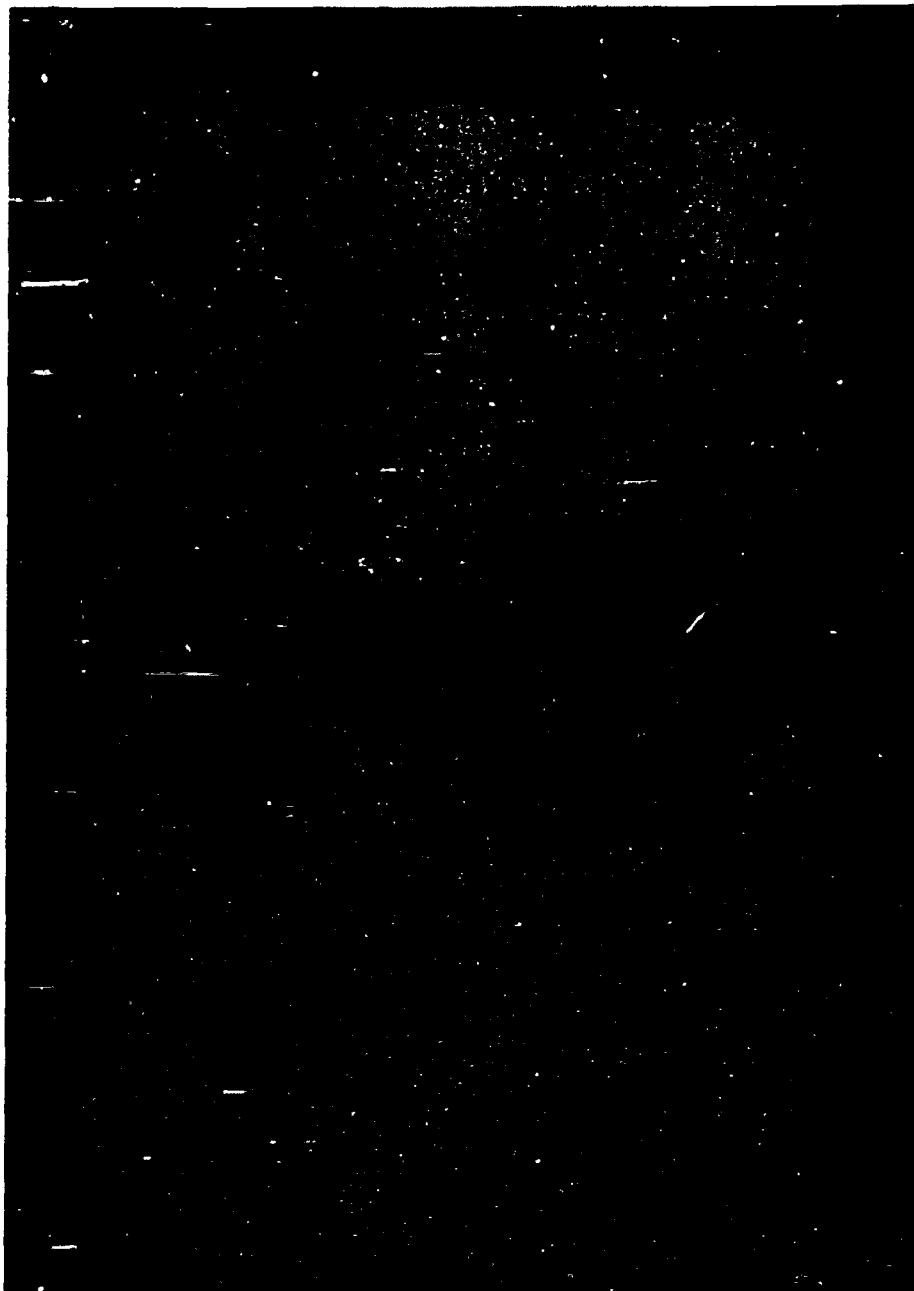
display individualistic traits which noticeably diverge from Thames-School conventions. These include the use of a projectionless square grid in lieu of rhumb lines, and quarter rather than full compass roses (Campbell 1973, 94). Most of Hack's charts are dominated by various shades of red, yellow, and green, with black or red lettering.

Regardless of how William Hack became acquainted with the buccaneers, he was the "minor and less respectable...successor of Richard Hakluyt" who brought the records of exploration contained in their maps and journals to the attention of the English aristocracy and, ultimately, to the public (Lynam 1953, 102; cf. Crone and Skelton 1946). In 1682, when Sharp returned from the South Sea facing charges of piracy in England, he carried with him cartographic booty that secured his pardon from the Crown. It was the Spanish manuscript sea atlas, or *derrotero*, which his crew had seized from a prize vessel off the coast of modern Ecuador, and which contained numerous detailed charts and navigational instructions for the Pacific coasts and harbors from the Gulf of California to Cape Horn.³⁴ Drake, we know, had confiscated a similar trophy over a century before, but even if it had not been lost its contents would have been terribly outdated. Morgan also captured a *derrotero* at Panamá in 1671, but its whereabouts soon became obscured.³⁵ Sharp engaged the services of Hack and a translator, Philip Dassigny,³⁶ to copy the *derrotero* and prepare an English rendition for Charles II. That copy, in the British Library, Hack prefaced on Sharp's behalf with an ornate and colorful dedication to the King (Figure 14).³⁷



**Figure 14: Dedication to the King's Copy of the South Sea
Wagoner Captured by Bartholomew Sharp**

(Manuscript by William Hack, BL 7.Tab.123)



Map 28: "Description of all the Navigable Parts of the World..." (1687)

(Manuscript by William Hack, BL Add.5414.6)



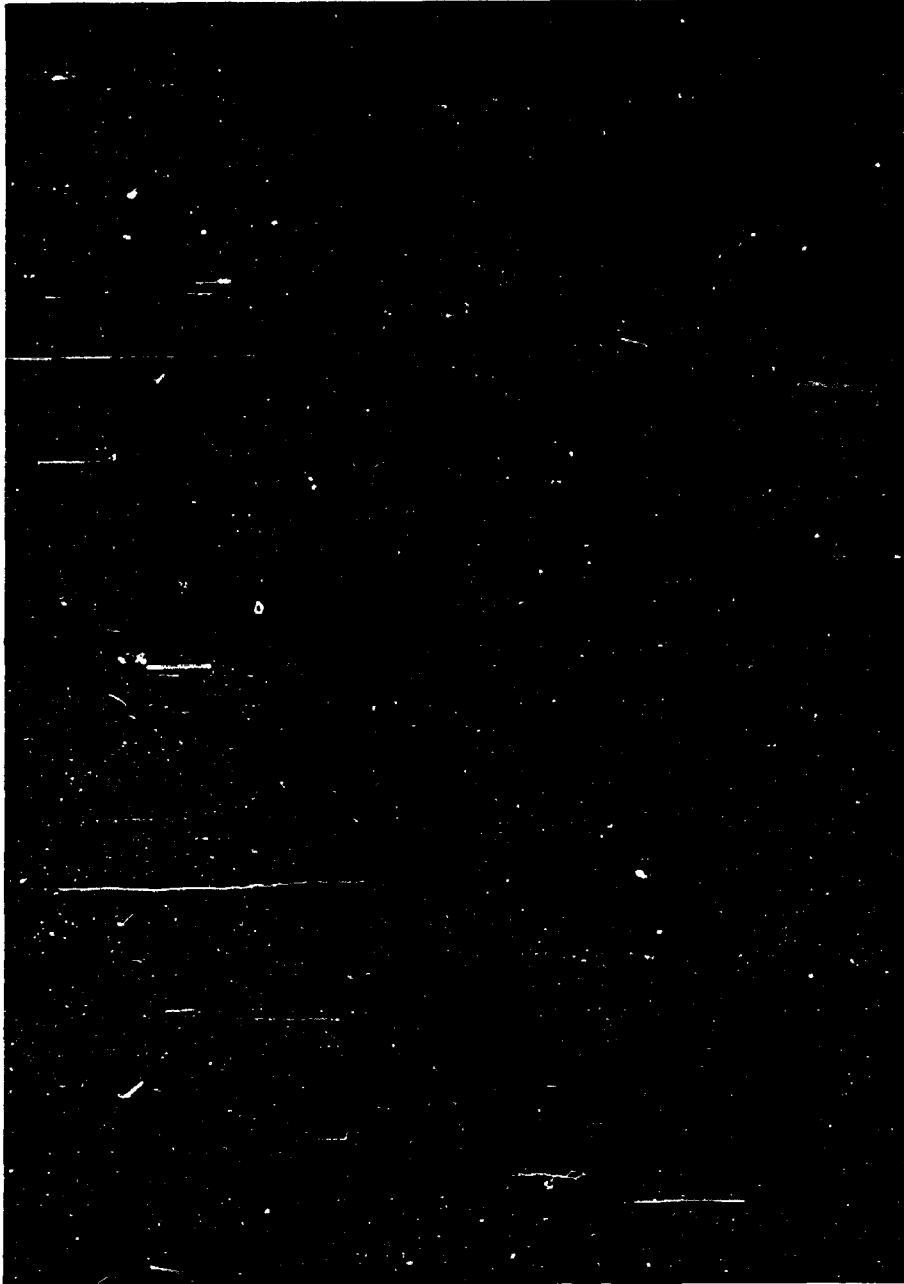
Map 29: William Hack's Manuscript Chart of Jamaica (1682)---

Dedicated to Bartholomew Sharp

(BL Add. 5414.4)



**Map 30: Chart of Acapulco, Derived from a Spanish Survey of 1669
(BL Harl. 4034)**



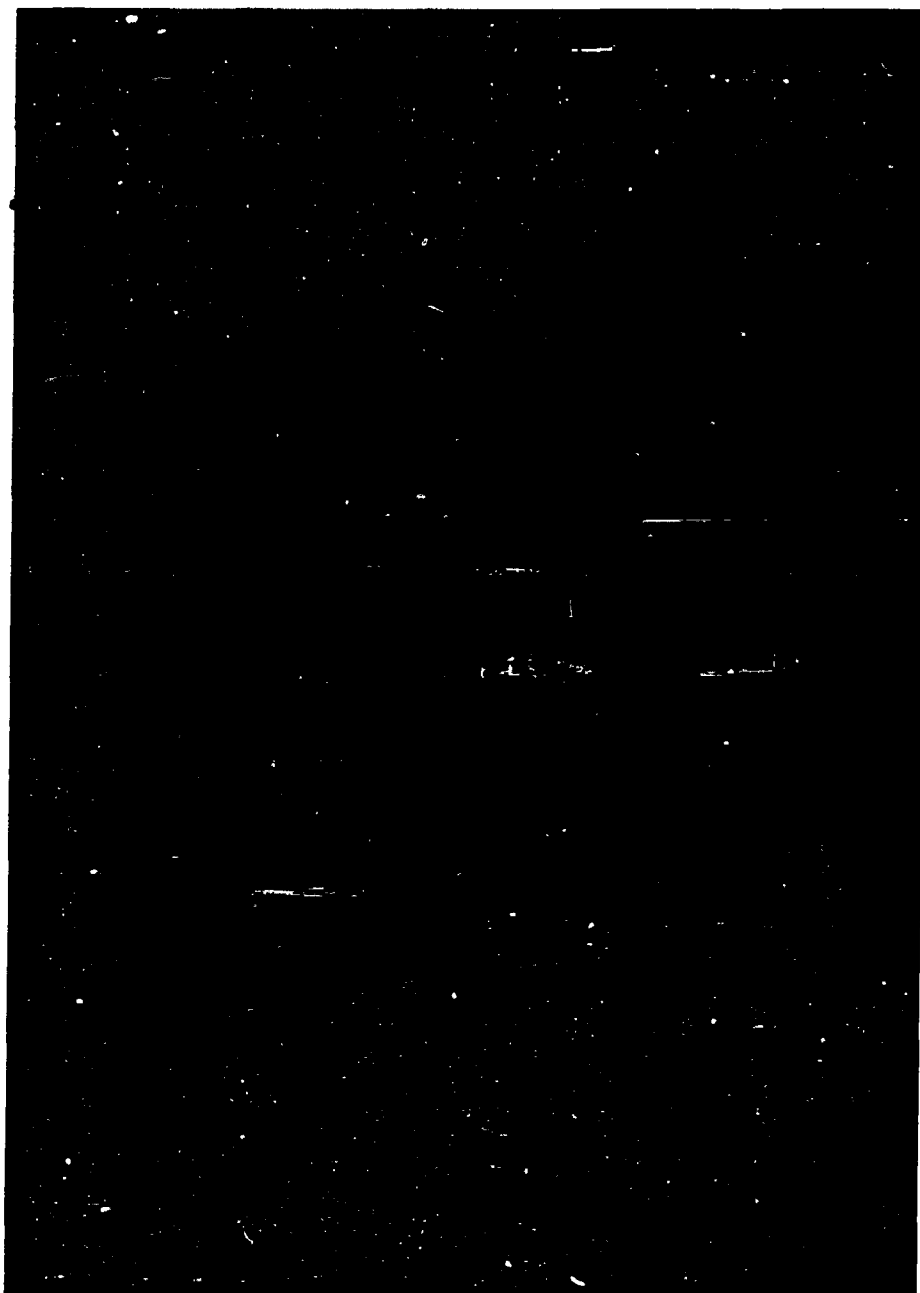
Map 31: William Hack's Chart of Acapulco (1682)

(BL 7. Tab. 123.)

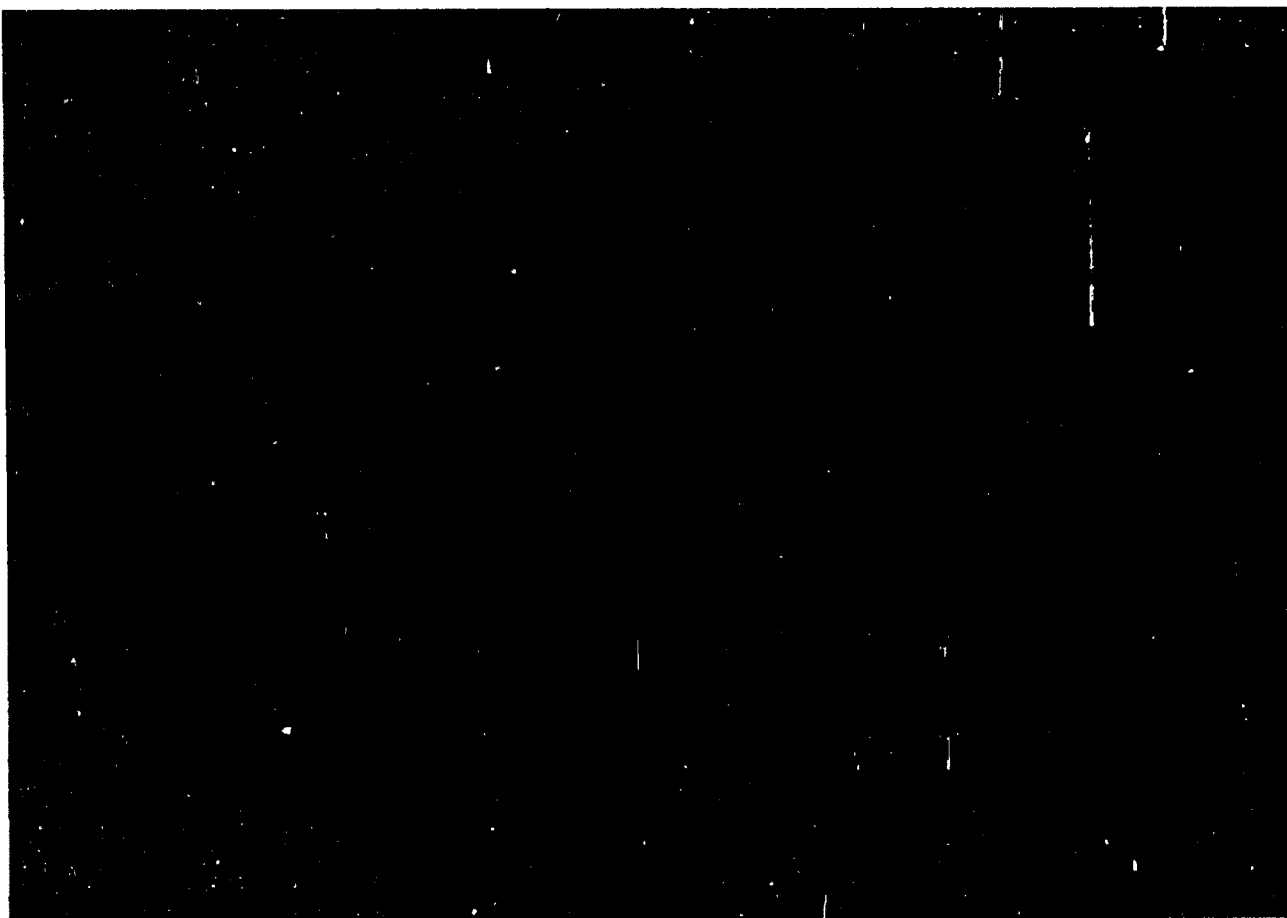


Map 32: A Later Chart of Acapulco by William Hack (1684)

(BL SI.44)



Map 33: Acapulco--Detail from an Anonymous Spanish Sea Atlas
(BL S1.239--undated manuscript)



**Map 34: Chart of Acapulco Derived from Spanish Sources--
Possibly Copied by Captain Charles Swan (c.1685)**

(PRO C.O.325/45)

Hack proceeded to draft thirteen copies of the stolen *derrotero* until at least 1698, and these he dedicated and sold to members of the aristocracy.³⁸ Comparing views of Acapulco from these and other manuscripts illustrates not only the progression of Hack's style, but also possible connections between his works and other South Sea wagoners. The original *derrotero* captured by Sharp is generally believed to be item HM918 housed by the Huntington Library in California ([Adams] 1967, 45; Skelton 1960, 202-3). A copy in Spanish with English translations, undated and unsigned but presumably prepared as a preliminary draft by Hack and Dassigny, resides in the Harleian collection of the British Library. Its last page indicates that the original Spanish compilation was surveyed in 1669 and completed at Panamá. The chart of Acapulco contained therein depicts the port settlement, the fortifications, and the passage by which the galleons arrived from Manila (Map 30). In the copy presented on Sharp's behalf to Charles II in 1682, a like view of Acapulco is embellished with gold leaf and an elaborate compass rose (Map 31). It exhibits colors more typical of Hack's work, as does a more fully shaded copy of 1684, also in the British Library (Map 32).

Other South Sea wagoners containing similar sets of charts may bear some relation to the Hack atlases, or at least derive from the same Spanish survey of 1669. Of these, the undated and unsigned Sloane MS 239 (Map 33) in the British Library was believed by Joyce (who made no mention of the Huntington manuscript) to be the original *derrotero* confiscated by Sharp (Joyce 1934, xxiv n). Another, deposited in Britain's Public Record Office at Kew (C.O.

325/45), was certainly possessed by Captain Charles Swan on the voyage of the *Cygnat*, for it bears his signature and various notations in his hand (Map 34).³⁹ This is a crude, tattered, and hastily prepared coasting pilot, mostly in Spanish, in which the copyist (possibly Swan himself) referred to, but did not name, at least two separate Spanish sources.⁴⁰ As Swan had commanded a vessel in Henry Morgan's fleet and was fluent in Spanish (Great Britain, Public Record Office 1974, 683; Cruikshank 1935), he may conceivably have had access to the charts captured by Morgan in 1671. Moreover, because Basil Ringrose sailed as his supercargo in the ill-fated voyage of the *Cygnat* (from which neither man returned), Swan may well have seen Sharp's *derrotero* or a derivative thereof. Ringrose is known to have drafted a separate copy of the Spanish atlas which is maintained by the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, a facsimile edition of which is currently being published by Derek Howse and Norman J.W. Thrower (1991).⁴¹

For security reasons publication of the purloined *derrotero* was initially forbidden by the English government. William Dick, a buccaneer veteran of Sharp's expedition, explained:

In...the *Rosario*, we took also a great book full of sea-charts and maps, containing a very accurate and exact description of all the ports, soundings, creeks, rivers, capes, and coasts belonging to the South Sea, and all the navigations usually performed by the Spaniards in that ocean.... It has been since translated into English, as I hear, by His Majesty's order, and copy of the translation, made by a Jew [Dassigny], I have seen at Wapping; but withal the printing thereof is severely prohibited, lest other nations should get into those seas and make use thereof, which is wished may be reserved only for England against its due time (1987, 278).

Nevertheless, largely because of Hack's industrious hand-copying, the information obtained by Sharp and others did circulate among the influential elite and undoubtedly contributed to a vigorous national policy of which the South Sea Company was one noteworthy product (Lynam 1953).⁴² The first *published* version of these Pacific coasts that I have found appeared in 1712 with Captain Edward Cooke's printed journal of his circumnavigation. That privateering voyage of the *Duke* and *Duchess* (1708-11) was commanded by Woodes Rogers, who likewise published a narrative. Cooke's printed maps of sea coasts "from the Port of Acapulco, to the Streights of Magellan" were "translated and copy'd from the Spanish Manuscript Coasting-Pilots" (1712, 109).

William Dampier was the only connection between the expeditions of Sharp, Swan, and Rogers (under whom he served as pilot for the South Seas). He also kept company with "his ingenious friend Mr. Ringrose" until that buccaneer was killed on the coast of Mexico in 1686 (Dampier 1927, 89). Dampier therefore must have had access to one or more of the *derroteros* mentioned above and may have been the sustaining force which finally enabled their information to become public.⁴³ Like the discoveries of Francis Drake, certain maps and findings of the buccaneers (purloined or second-hand though they may have been) enjoyed limited circulation or recognition in their own day. Thus we might add another category to Edwards' classification scheme: secret discoveries suppressed for reasons of political intrigue.

Unlike corsairs and buccaneers, the eighteenth-century freebooters who brought piracy in Spanish America to a dazzling

finish had no care for the colonial concerns or commercial health of their respective motherlands. By the same token these pirates made little effort to extend the geographical horizons of their countrymen. Consequently I have found neither journals nor maps in the wake of these ruffians to enlarge upon our study of Spanish America; their crimes apparently left nothing but spectacle for posterity to ponder. 'Captain Johnson', their chief historian, prefaced his account of their exploits with the following:

It must be observed that our speculative mathematicians and geographers who are, no doubt, men of the greatest learning, seldom travel farther than their own closets for their knowledge, and are therefore unqualified to give us a good description of countries. It is for this reason that all of our maps and atlases are so monstrously faulty, for these gentlemen are obliged to take their accounts from the reports of illiterate men. It must be noted also that when the masters of ships make discoveries this way, they are not fond of communicating them. A man's knowing this or that coast better than others recommends him in his business and makes him more useful, and he'll no more discover it than a tradesman will the mystery of his trade (Johnson [Defoe?] 1926, xi).

Johnson (or Defoe) may well have described the pirates of his own day but not, as we have witnessed, certain geographers--in all but name--who sailed among the buccaneers. Comparing the achievements of William Dampier to the short and bloody career of Blackbeard only vindicates Bolitho's admonition in *Twelve Against the Gods*: "It is when pirates count their booty that they become mere thieves."⁴⁴

Notes

¹ Here as well I cannot take first credit. In a short review of Clennell Wilkinson's life of William Dampier, W.C.D. Dampier-Wetham introduced the biographer's subject as "William Dampier, Geographer" (1929, 478). He offered, however, no support for that appellation. Because of his broad range of interests and observations, William Dampier has been a favorite posthumous conscript for various disciplines; thus we have been given "Dampier: Pirate and Naturalist" (Matthews 1952), "William Dampier: Buccaneer and Planter" (Bennett 1964); *William Dampier: Seaman-Scientist* (Shipman 1962); and *Captain William Dampier: Buccaneer-Author* (Bonner, 1934).

² Readers may refer to Hampden (1972) for a sample of le Testu's work depicting the West Indies in 1555. His chart of the Strait of Magellan appears in Putman (1983), and one of southern Africa has been reproduced in Williams (1975).

³ Fletcher was the chaplain on Drake's circumnavigatory voyage whose journal was finally published by Drake's nephew as *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* in 1628.

⁴ This map's inscription translates as "seen and corrected by the said Sir Drake" (Nuttall 1914, facing lvi).

⁵ Keeler was the first to demonstrate conclusively that Boazio accompanied Drake on the voyage as a page to Christopher Carleill. She further pointed out that the cartographer's linguistic capabilities would have proved equally valuable (1978, 72).

⁶ Bigges was a the captain-lieutenant of Carleill's company. He was killed in the battle of Cartagena, but his journal was completed by a Lieutenant Crofts. In addition there exists an anonymous manuscript account of the voyage, the 'Primrose Journal' in the British Museum (see British Library 1977, 106-7).

⁷ Most of the pirates thus remembered are introduced in Chapter 2. La Sound (or Lessone) was a French buccaneer who explored the Panamanian isthmus and participated in Coxon's Porto Bello raid in 1679-80 (Joyce, ed. [Wafer] 1934, xvii n and 39). Captain Yallahs (or Yellowes) was a Dutch buccaneer operating out of Jamaica and Tortuga (Haring 1910, 201). After 1671, Yallahs hired himself out to the Spanish Governor of Campeche to hunt down his former comrades and prevent them from cutting logwood in the Laguna de Términos (Burdon 1931, 52-55). Prince Rupert, though certainly the most blueblooded-pirate of Spanish America, was also a rank amateur who found no success there (Gosse 1924, 271; Mitchell 1976, 123).

⁸ As indicated in Chapter 2 (note 21) that bay has since been named in honor of Cavendish's predecessor, Sir Francis Drake.

⁹ This section has been revised from a paper, "Maps of the Buccaneers," delivered by the author at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Baltimore (March 20, 1989).

¹⁰ My own research has concentrated on British archival holdings. It is entirely possible that earlier maps of buccaneers will be found among French, Dutch, or West Indian manuscript collections.

¹¹ The French version of his name is Oexmelin, pronounced eks'muh·lan' (silent n). Exquemelin was long thought to have been a Netherlander or Fleming primarily because his book was first published in Dutch. Most modern authorities concur, however, that he was, as the editor of the first French translation (1686) asserted, a Frenchman from Harfleur (or possibly Honfleur--see Gosse 1946, 146n). For biographical details, which are sketchy but complex, consult Gosse (1924, 125), Kemp and Lloyd (1960, 11-13), Great Britain, National Maritime Museum (1972, 51), and Beeching (in Exquemelin 1972, 16-18).

¹² Exquemelin's observations of Tortuga and its buccaneers are noted in Chapter 3.

¹³ Only two copies of the 1678 Dutch edition are known to exist; one is housed in the British Library, the other in the Huntington Library. For complete bibliographic descriptions of the earliest editions and translations, see Sabin (1875, 309-18). Another useful listing appears in the *National Maritime Museum Catalogue of the Library, Volume Four: Piracy and Privateering* (Great Britain, National Maritime Museum 1972, 51-60).

¹⁴ The earliest editions of Exquemelin's Panama map have been described in detail by Kapp (1971b). For a modern edition of the 1686 French version see Exquemelin (1967).

¹⁵ The expedition was well documented by the pirates themselves, and some of their journals are preserved in the British Library. For a complete listing of primary sources, both manuscript and printed, see Lloyd (1956, 301). The most complete and accessible printed version is that by Ringrose (1685 or numerous modern editions, e.g. 1987). Good secondary accounts have been synthesized by Burney (1891), Masfield (1922), and Kemp and Lloyd (1960).

¹⁶ This is the undated Sloane MS 48 in the British Library. In this version, probably the one used to prepare the printed edition of

1685, copyist William Hack made several minor changes to enhance the image of Captain Sharp.

17 Hack made numerous copies of Sharp's journal, including Sloane MSS 46.a. and 46.b. in the British Library.

18 Sharp's crew never sailed to Valdivia (Baldivia). The identical cartographic error both on Hack's 1682 manuscript map and the anonymous printed version of 1685 strongly suggests a connection between the two, but these may have derived from another, common source.

19 Successive maroonings there and the connection to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* are discussed in Chapter 2.

20 Tooley (1979, 579) attributed to Sharp a 1682 manuscript atlas of the South Sea (7.Tab.123. in the British Library), but this is the royal copy made by Hack from a captured Spanish *derrotero*. Masfield (in Dampier 1906, 536) also credited Sharp with compiling later copies of this atlas (e.g. BL Sl.44, the cover of which is embossed with "Sharp's South Sea Wagoner.") These two works were dedicated to King Charles II on Sharp's behalf, hence the confusion. These were nevertheless, like the manuscript copies of Sharp's journal, the handiwork of William Hack.

21 A modern edition of Wafer's *New Voyage & Description of the Isthmus of America* was prepared by L.E.E. Joyce as part of the Hakluyt Society Second Series (1934).

22 Both Kapp (1971b, 16) and Tooley (1985, 111) credited Wafer with Dampier's map of Panama.

23 In his preface to *A New Voyage Round the World*, Dampier compared this map to the one published by his old comrade, Basil Ringrose:

...there is in the Map of the American Isthmus, a new Scheme of the adjoining Bay of Panama and its Islands, which to some may seem superfluous after that which Mr. Ringrose hath published in the History of the Buccaneers; and which he offers as an exact Draught. I must needs disagree with him in that, and doubt not but this which I here publish will be found more agreeable to that Bay, by one who shall have the opportunity to examine it; for it is a contraction of a larger Map which I took from several Stations in the Bay it self (1927, 5).

24 There are several biographies of Dampier. The concise one used here is by Christopher Lloyd (1966). Modern editions of Dampier's

voyages and maps (1906 and 1927) also include valuable supplementary information.

25 The *Discourse of Trade-Winds* was first published in 1699 as part of *Voyages and Discoveries*.

26 The European discoverers of the Falklands are discussed briefly in Chapter 2. For a better account of the early discoveries and cartography of the Falkland Islands, see Birtles (1983). The British Library contains two manuscript copies of Cowley's journal (Sl. 54 and 1050), in which he recounted his sighting of the "Sibble D'wards" at 47 degrees, 40 minutes South. The true latitude of the Falklands is 51 degrees, 45 minutes.

27 Therein Hack truncated the latitude given by Cowley to an even 47 degrees, again omitting Cowley's reference to the "Sibble D'wards."

28 John Byron attempted to find Pepys Island during his circumnavigation of 1764-1766 (Crone and Skelton 1946, 77).

29 The only place I have seen Hack refer to himself as "Captain" is on the title page of *A Collection of Original Voyages* (1699).

30 Tooley (1979, 274) was not alone in reaching this conclusion; given the known facts at the time, it was an understandable supposition. Edward Lynam made a similar claim (1953).

31 Campbell advocated naming this group the Drapers' School because of the central role of the Company in perpetuating its style (1973, 98-99). Smith promoted the title of Thames School, originally suggested by Jeannette Black, because of the river's functional role in the school's development. He further pointed out that the school's cartographic style antedated the formation of any apprenticeship network within the Drapers' Company (Smith 1978, 55-59).

32 Diagnostic characteristics of the school have been described by Campbell (1973, 81-82) and Smith (1978, 46).

33 Hack produced at least four charts on wooden panels, including his 1682 MS (BL Add.5414.26) of Sharp's Voyage (Smith 1978, 77).

34 The first mention in print of the *derrotero* captured by Sharp appeared with a short account of the voyage, signed "W.D.," in Crooke's 1685 edition of *Bucaniers of America* (see also 1987). W.D. was identified by Lloyd as William Dick, a participant in Sharp's Voyage (1956, 295).

³⁵ Morgan's captured *derrotero* is mentioned three times in the *Calendar of State Papers* of Great Britain's Public Record Office (1889, 7:247, 315, 388). Given the place and date of capture (Panama, 1671), it may have been drawn from the same source as Sharp's *derrotero*, which was evidently compiled from a survey completed at Panamá in 1669 (as indicated in the British Library's Harl.4034, presumably the first manuscript copy of the atlas prepared by Hack).

³⁶ Little is known about the career of Hack's translator, Philip Dassigny. William Dick identified him as a Jew living in Wapping as of 1682 (1987, 278). He was of course fluent in Spanish, and the spelling of his name makes me wonder if he may have been of French background. His name was bestowed upon one of the Galápagos Islands in the charts produced by Cowley and Hack (see Hack's 1699 printed version or his 1687 manuscript in the British Library). If Dassigny was a companion of Cowley's during the 1684 voyage of the *Bachelor's Delight*, he may well have engaged himself as a practicing buccaneer. More likely, however, Hack decided to honor his associate with a toponymic insertion of his own accord. It is certain, however, that Dassigny was residing in the Indies as of 1687. His full signature appears with others on a document of that date, reproduced by Hamshere from an unspecified holding in the Public Record Office. That testimonial certifies, of all things, that "Rum made in Jamaica is prefferr'd before Brandy brought hither from England" (in Hamshere 1972, 96). In the French colonies, at any rate, Jews and Huguenots alike were not particularly welcome, though many found ready employment among the *flibustiers*. Port Royal had a thriving Jewish enclave whose synagogue was destroyed in the earthquake of 1692. Dassigny may have perished there. One would like to know more about the translator's doubtlessly fascinating career—one possibly seasoned (unlike that of "Captain" Hack) with true piratical adventures.

³⁷ The dedication is of particular interest because it illustrates the navigational instruments of the period: the Davis' quadrant (upper left) and cross-staff (upper right). For an explanation of their uses, see Rogers (1894, 28-29).

³⁸ The most complete listing and description of Hack's South Sea atlases has been provided by Adams (1967). Although he listed fourteen such works, one of these MSS (BL Sl.47) contains no maps, only the written sailing directions.

³⁹ One entry, headed "Monies lent by: Cha: Swann," includes mention of two ounces of gold loaned to "Cap. Haris" (MS Swan 1685, f.3). Swan must therefore have been using this atlas during the voyage of the *Cygnat* when he took up company with Peter Harris. In addition,

explicit reference to "ye Shipp Signit" appears on a fragmentary folio (f.4).

⁴⁰ At the bottom of ff.64~65 there is a notation to that effect: "The following Land one ye other Side is ye Same wth this beneath but drane forth of An other Spanyards boock."

⁴¹ This is manuscript P.32 in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Ringrose's atlas was the subject of a Master's thesis prepared in 1981 by Tony Cimolino for the Geography Department of the University of California, Los Angeles. As of this writing, Howse and Thrower's facsimile edition was still in press.

⁴² Swan's sea atlas was in fact annotated with a description of the South Sea Company's charter (PRO C.O.325/45, f.2).

⁴³ This, I must stress, is simply conjecture on my part. The sequence of information brokering is always difficult to pin down, especially when attempting to link these various sea atlases. William Hack also played a prominent connective role, and one must remember the invaluable contributions of Sir Hans Sloane, the colonial physician who collected and donated so much of the pirate lore preserved under his name in the manuscript collection of the British Library. Moreover, it is certainly conceivable that Cooke and Rogers acquired yet another Spanish *derrotero* with their capture of the Manila galleon in 1709. It would seem likely, however, that Dampier took an active part at least somewhere along the line. Cooke certainly borrowed liberally enough from geographic data generated by the previous voyages and publications of Sharp, Dampier, and Funnell.

⁴⁴ Quoted from William Bolitho's "Introduction" to *Twelve Against the Gods*, first published in 1929.

Chapter 5

REFLECTIONS IN THE WAKE

Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of
 their pillage
And purchase friends and give to courtesans,
Still reveling like lords till all be gone;
While as the silly owner of the goods
Weeps over them and wrings his hapless hands.

--William Shakespeare
 II *Henry VI*
 (Act i sc.1)

Reconstructing the Stage

In the second chapter the reader entered the "Battle Beyond the Line" with a theatrical metaphor. The Pope and the statesmen of Europe became stage manager and choreographers. The Spanish colonials were accorded--for the sake of plot and argument--first and rightful occupancy of the set. Perhaps in that respect they performed as tragic heroes, undermined ultimately by their own hubris. The main actors in the play were French, English, and Dutch pirates--rendered *antagonists* only by definition of their crime. They, too, succumbed in the end to a fatal flaw. It occurs to me now that the analogy to dramatic spectacle applies as well in the larger context of historical and geographical research.

Reconstituting the past is of necessity an integrative and collaborative production. The historian is concerned mainly with recovering the plot, the precise sequence of actions, perhaps even a shred of dialogue long unspoken. The biographer attempts to revive the characters, their personalities, their motives. The geographer strives to reconstruct the stage itself, not just the configuration of the boards and the mechanics of the set, but the arrangement of props which influence the players' movements and the selection of scenery which lends their performance a vital dimension of *place*.

When all is said and done the audience will most likely remember the characters, their mannerisms and deeds, maybe a few of their choice lines. Only rarely do the contours of the stage, the colors of the backdrop, or the choreography of the proceedings make a conscious and lasting impression on the viewer. Without these,

however, the delivery would be vapid and two-dimensional, a mere recitation of events. By the same token our study of Spanish American geography, as spectacular a setting as man and nature could provide, would remain a hollow diorama were it not enriched with the lives and histories of the pirates and their Spanish prey. Like a set designer I have concentrated on one aspect of a complex undertaking.

Although the chorological development of piracy in Spanish America has been my overriding concern, I have endeavored to portray these spatial elements with sufficient contextual references to historical personalities and events. Given the breadth of the stage and the duration of the performance, I have had to generalize both plot and characters far more than might a historian or a biographer. For this reason, before accentuating any geographical denouement revealed by this study, I would first redress certain misconceptions which it may have encouraged regarding the players and their actions.

To focus our inquiry I have emphasized the Spaniards' enmity with the English, French, and Dutch. In the broadest sense that hostility was in fact sustained throughout the period examined, but not with diplomatic or military consistency and not without overtures and concessions to peaceful coexistence and trade. At times Spain's aggressions were channeled toward only one or two of her competitors while an alliance was maintained with a third. Even when war or its practical equivalent persisted, however, responses in Europe did not always correspond to those in the Americas. Gilbert Joseph has warned against assuming "a monolithic Spanish

position" even within the jurisdiction of the colonies, and his caveat is a sensible one (1974, 12). I have also portrayed the Spaniards principally as victims, and I fear that by lionizing the pirates' exploits I may have miscast their Spanish adversaries as passive or inept. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul Hoffman's analysis (1980) has ably demonstrated that the Spaniards answered the aggressions of the sixteenth-century corsairs with vigorous and rational defensive policies. Their position was ultimately indefensible, and it is only a credit to their courage and stamina that they were able to retain as much of their wealth and territory for as long as they did. By the same token, while lumping the assaults of the French, English, and Dutch rovers in one piratical bag, I have downplayed the antagonisms which certainly existed between these ingressing powers. Joint deployments and mixed crews were indeed a trademark of the buccaneers, and Spain usually fell out as their common enemy, but warfare and piracy frequently punctuated alliances between fellow contenders as well. In short, the chameleonic mesh of European warfare and diplomacy, especially as transfigured by the Americas, was far more complex than the scope of the present inquiry might suggest.

Finally, despite the overwhelming attention in the annals of piracy to the initiatives and consequences of European involvement, I am convinced more than ever that aboriginal Americans and African descendants (slaves, freemen, and *cimarrones*) played far more significant roles in the struggle for Spanish America than the 'bit parts' accorded them by history. Of their contributions as combatants and transmitters of vital geographical intelligence we

should like to know more. With these thoughts in mind, let us review the geographic consequences of a line drawn in 1494.

Legacy of the Line

One might wonder to what extent Pope Alexander VI contemplated the possible consequences of the Treaty of Tordesillas. Little did he know, of course, what lay beyond the line which awarded one nation from an all-Catholic Europe legitimate hegemony over most of the western hemisphere. Were he, however, to have condoned that decision given full knowledge of the geographic configurations and attributes of the Americas, coupled with the piratical experience of his native Mediterranean, could he have predicted any of the developments which we have seen enacted? Spatially, at least, Mediterranean and Spanish American piracy responded to a similar set of fairly restrictive geographic criteria. The configuration of lands and seas overlain with the exigencies of sail-borne commerce left few strategic alternatives. Like their mercantile quarry, pirates positioned their bases and movements with respect to choke points, promontories, prevailing winds and currents, food and water supplies, stands of lumber, port facilities, and markets. Their operations were further channeled by seasonal constraints. Certain coasts, because of their convoluted shore lines or rugged interiors, were particularly suitable for piratical settlement and retreat.

Spanish America was not the Mediterranean, however. Its isthmian physiography alone dictated a unique brand of piracy. What

had been a cultural corridor for aboriginal Americans posed only a sea barrier to maritime-oriented Europeans. For the Spaniards the Central American land bridge was both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because it prevented sea rovers from wreaking greater havoc than they did in the South Sea. Drake and Cavendish circumvented the problem by plying the Strait of Magellan, but that feat was not repeated with frequency or enthusiasm. Oxenham succeeded in crossing Panama only to be captured and executed for his accomplishment. Not until the latter seventeenth century did buccaneers perfect overland maneuvers across Nicaragua and the Darien. Panamá held out until 1671 and Acapulco never did fall to the torch. Moreover, though the buccaneers raided South Sea coasts from Cape Horn to California, they never established a permanent base in the Pacific.

Central America was by the same token a bane to Spanish merchants who needed to transport goods and treasure across it. Two major traverses presented themselves: the Río San Juan and the cross-Panama track. Both routes proved highly vulnerable, creating strategic choke points worse than any maritime bottleneck; and the pirates took full advantage of the Spaniards' predicament. Of course other features distinguished Spanish American piracy from its Old World antecedent. Here was a completely fresh social milieu of continuing exploration, conquest, and colonial intrigue. The resultant pattern of piracy and Spanish retaliation owed as much to the capriciousness of political will and historical accident as it did to predictable geographic influences.

By 1536 piracy had become a fact of life in Spanish America. The first corsairs were French, soon followed by the English and the Dutch. The Greater Antilles, as the Spaniards' first treasure houses in the New World, bore the brunt of initial attacks. Havana, last American port of call for homebound caravels and galleons, suffered greatly during these early years. As the Spaniards fortified San Juan, Santo Domingo, and Havana, they also expanded ever deeper into the continental interior. Their commercial focus likewise moved southward and westward to the Main and the Gulf, and the corsairs followed on their heels to increasingly lucrative yet poorly defended hunting grounds. Drake and Cavendish extended the arena to the South Sea, bringing the hitherto unmolested Peruvian and Manila trade into the fray. By the end of the corsair century most of the important Caribbean targets had been thoroughly initiated; of the six Middle American entrepôts only Vera Cruz, Panamá, and Acapulco escaped relatively unscathed. Still, Spanish America remained unblemished by permanent rival colonies.

The buccaneers of the seventeenth century brought many changes, yet more similarities than differences persisted between these pirates and their corsair forerunners. Their methods were not particularly new. Like their predecessors they relied on small boats to ply the shallows and to land their assaults beyond the range of enemy guns. Though they put new cities to plunder and to flame, they really only consummated the piratical designs already established by the corsairs. Even their much fêted overland maneuvers, culminating with Morgan's *coup de grâce* at Panamá, had been presaged by the likes of Drake and Oxenham. Many of the

buccaneers, again emulating the Elizabethan sea dogs, even fueled their lust for Spanish gold with a good measure of patriotism and anti-Catholic zeal. What separated the buccaneers from the corsairs was not the change of centuries; nor was it their military tactics, religious motives, political affiliations, 'democratic' lifestyle, or even their near-legendary past as hunters in the forests and savannas of Hispaniola. In part it was a subtle combination of all these things, but mostly it was a simple fact of geography. The buccaneer was a true frontiersman, the first American pirate. Though he may not have been born in the New World, he belonged to it. He washed himself of European identity when he crossed the Tropic of Cancer, determined to live off the land and whatever goods he could plunder. Buccaneers were the harbingers of French, English, and Dutch colonialism; by building strongholds in the midst of Spain's American empire they informed their reluctant Spanish hosts that they intended to stay.

More than symbolizing the entrenchment of piracy in the region, these bases upset the entire geopolitical equation there and significantly enhanced the strategic options of the buccaneers. Previously, corsairs had operated pretty much within the same spatial and seasonal constraints as their Spanish prey. Their general raiding circuit essentially shadowed the convoy routes established by the Spaniards. The Indies-based buccaneers, by contrast, were much freer to strike when and where they pleased from centralized strongholds in the very heart of Spanish America. Thus the pattern of piracy shifted from circuitous pillaging to radial attack. Moreover, the buccaneers likewise assumed the best position

for continual harassment of inter-colonial shipping. Leather, maize, cassava, wine, cacao, cochineal, lumber, and equally mundane-but-useful cargoes were their usual payback, not gold bullion or pieces of eight.

Tortuga, the tiny, near-forgotten *isla inútil*, was arguably the first and most strategic of the pirate strongholds. It facilitated and shaped the transition of the hunting *boucanier* into the roving buccaneer. In its fitful youth it furthered the interests of all three piratical nations--English, French, and Dutch. Its seasoned buccaneers manned the boats of Port Royal, and in its prime Tortuga enabled French colonial expansion to greater *Saint-Domingue*. Spatially, it is worth noting that three other great privateering strongholds--Curaçao, Port Royal, and Petit-Goâve--lay within five degrees longitude of Tortuga. Only Providence Island, historically Tortuga's bold-but-reckless piratical twin, flourished briefly on the margin of the westward frontier. It is no coincidence that Tortuga, Curaçao, and Jamaica ascended from buccaneer lairs to become colonial capitals for their respective governments. These were Whittlesey's insular springboards, and as such Jamaica proved most successful of them all.

The buccaneers who secured them were, like all pirates, supremely motivated by self-profit. The advancement of colonial life, in which few of them held much personal stake, only served to fill their pockets. When their benefactors consolidated sufficient power and territory on their own, the buccaneers had outlived their usefulness. Those who could not conform to the new colonial

establishment--and they were many--either removed to the outer frontier, perhaps trying their hand at the logwood trade, or struck out on their own account as freebooters.

With the eclipse of the buccaneer strongholds, and with them colonial approbation of piracy, the pattern of freebooting dissolved from centralized assaults to peripheral forays, removing largely from Spanish American waters altogether. The picaroons who ushered in the eighteenth century knew they were doomed to a short and brutal reign of the seas; those skulls and skeletons fluttering above their mizzenmasts uncannily prefigured their own heads and corpses dangling from bowsprits and yardarms in the short years to come. Save for a few corrupt governors and conniving merchants, the whole world was their enemy; and the freebooters lashed out against the whole world. Spanish America had been their nursery, and for a time New Providence served as their den, but their hunting grounds extended from North America to Guinea, from Madagascar to the Red Sea. These were true sea rovers; afforded neither protection nor plunder from the land, any safe harbor served them shelter until they were hunted down to extinction.

Pirates of the kind we have studied no longer inhabit Spanish America, and scarce evidence remains on the landscape to betray their former abodes. Some of their haunts were habitual refuges of passing convenience; others were settlements of more permanent intent. Supplying just the immediate material and tactical needs of raiders were small, remote, desolate island groups ranging from the Bahamas to Juan Fernández. These places served merely as refreshment and supply outposts, *carénages*, hideouts, and bases of

attack. Consequently they invited only short, sporadic visits and little proof of such clandestine operations survives today. Stretching along the Middle American coast from Bluefields to Campeche were the logwood and smuggling encampments of the buccaneers. Chronic rather than permanent describes the piratical infestation of these coasts. Here again the decline both of piracy and logwood bequeathed few conspicuous mementos of a malfeasant past. Of course the British cultural inheritance remains strong in Mosquitia and especially Belize, but the extent actually attributable to piracy will perhaps never be known. For many years pirate fortresses irrefutably proclaimed the territorial footholds carved out by the buccaneers, but even these were destroyed or subsumed by legitimate colonial powers long ago. Because the pirates left so few tangibles in their own wake, one must turn to the colonial legacies of their sovereign sponsors and Spanish victims for a lasting souvenir of their imprint on the land.

With his landmark study, *The European Nations in the West Indies* (1933), A.P. Newton published a most revealing map. It depicts the circum-Caribbean as of 1680 with "Coasts and places in effective Spanish occupation in Red...and places in the effective occupation of other nations in Black." It is a portrait of Spanish America dismantled, the fruition of inroads spearheaded by pirates for nearly a century and a half. The results of these ingressions persist in the cultural and political boundaries of the Caribbean realm today. Likewise does the reliot Hispanic landscape betray a piratical menace long since destroyed. The ramparts of Cartagena, San Juan, Havana, Campeche, and San Juan de Ulúa stand in mute

testament to less secure times; other settlements owe their very locations to the depredations of corsairs and buccaneers. San Germán in southwest Puerto Rico was one of the first recipients of the pirates' torch. Its re-establishment inland echoed the age-old coastal response noted by Semple in her study of the Mediterranean; likewise, the twin cities of Quito-Guayaquil and Lima-Callao reflected the interior capitals/forward ports of ancient Greece and Rome (Andrews 1978, 65; Hoffman 1980, 56; Semple 1916, 136-37). After Drake's pillaging, Nombre de Dios was abandoned in favor of Porto Bello. Modern Panama City rises a few miles west of the burned-out, overgrown ruins of original Panamá--Henry Morgan's contribution to the changing face of colonial Spanish America. These developments, visible enough on the map and on the land, admittedly betoken a shameful legacy of human folly and greed.

Another, equally tangible geographical consequence presents a nobler aspect of piracy, though hardly a redemptive one. It is the lasting contribution of pirates toward the understanding and description of the New World. As adventurers, corsairs and buccaneers could not help but participate in the processes of discovery and exploration. Geographical enquiry was, as Dampier explained, part and parcel of their belligerent trade:

Privateers have an account of most Towns within 20 Leagues of the Sea, on all the Coast from *Trinidad* down to *La Vera Cruz*; ...For they make it their Business to examine all Prisoners that fall into their Hands, concerning the Country, Town, or City that they belong to; ...how many Families? whether most *Spaniards*? or whether the major part are not Copper-colour'd, as *Mulattoes*, *Mustesoes*, or *Indians*? whether rich, and what their Riches do consist in? and what their chiefest Manufactures? if fortified, how many great Guns, and what number of small Arms? whether it is possible to come undescrib'd on them? How many Look-outs or

Centinels...and how the Look-outs are placed? Whether possible to avoid the Look-outs, or take them? If any River or Creek comes near it, or where the best Landing; with innumerable other such Questions, which their Curiosities led them to demand (1927, 28).

That a select few--the likes of Drake, Exquemelin, Ringrose, Cowley, Wafer, and Dampier--took pains to record these and even more valuable observations for posterity is a credit to their abilities and vision. Maps, journals, and the knowledge these generated were the only real treasures bequeathed by the pirates, though these would seem scant recompense for sanguinary heroism and ignominious defeat, for the thousands of atrocities committed 'beyond the line'.

Because Spain's claim to the greater part of the New World was simply untenable, the pirates who took advantage of it were likewise doomed to a pivotal but finite career. Nevertheless, the romance of the struggle still invokes conjecture of the kind penned by 'Captain Johnson' at the end of the era:

Rome, the Mistress of the World, was no more at first than a refuge for thieves and outlaws; and if the progress of our Pirates had been equal to their beginning, and had they all united and settled in some of those islands, they might by this time have been honoured with the name of a commonwealth, and no power in those parts of the world could have been able to dispute it with them (Johnson [Defoe?] 1962, 21).

To the vanquished Spaniard, of course, it must have seemed that they were indeed *piratas* who ultimately accomplished exactly that.

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Abbreviations:

BL British Library, London, England

Tab. indicates MSS. from the Map Library

MSS. in the Manuscripts Students' Room:

Add. *Additional Manuscripts*

Eg. *Egerton Manuscripts*

Harl. *Harley Manuscripts*

Sl. *Sloane Manuscripts*

Stowe *Stowe Manuscripts*

NMM National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England

PRO Public Record Office, Kew, England

AGI *Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain*

(MSS headed by collection number if author unknown)

AGI Guatemala 44-July 1643. "Testimo. de la entrada y robo Del enemigo en trux por el Mes de Jullio de 1643." 1644.

BL Add.5027.A.f.3. "Planta Del Puerto; Ciu:d y Castillos de S. Phelipe de Puertovelo." 17th century.

BL Add.5415.G.11. "Planta Del Puerto; Ciu:d y Castillos de S. Phelipe de Puertovelo." Copy of above MS.

BL Add.15,494.No.22. Map of Port Royal, Jamaica. 17th century.

BL Eg.2395. Miscellaneous official papers relating to English settlements in America, including:

ff.481-82. Depositions taken before Thomas Lynch from John Coxon and others, concerning logwood cutting in Yucatan. 1672.

f.571. Report of the trial and execution of Browne, a privateer, in Jamaica. 1677.

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VITA

The son of Ralph and Virginia Galvin, Peter Reppert Galvin was born in the port city of Seattle on December 7, 1958. When he was six months old, his family brought him to the Midwest, where he spent his youth amid the cornfields of Indiana. Desperately seeking a way back to sea, he enrolled after high school in an academy for the Merchant Marine, but quickly resigned. After various studies at Butler, Indiana, and Purdue Universities, he committed to a major in agriculture, graduating in 1980 'With Highest Distinction' from Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science in International Agriculture. Peace Corps service subsequently brought him to West Africa, where he taught surveying and soil science at the Regional College of Agriculture in Bambili, Cameroon. Upon returning to the United States he studied geography and history at Indiana University and in 1983 moved back to Seattle for graduate work in geography at the University of Washington. There he met his present wife, Lucinda Woodward. He studied cartography under Professor John Sherman and Soviet agriculture under Professor W.A. Douglas Jackson, receiving a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of Washington in 1985. Afterwards he accepted an Alumni Federation Fellowship at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, to pursue doctoral studies in the Department of Geography and Anthropology. Under Professor William V. Davidson he emphasized Latin American historical geography, with a minor in anthropology overseen by Professor Miles Richardson. Mr. Galvin currently teaches geography at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Peter R. Galvin

Major Field: Geography

Title of Dissertation: THE PIRATES' WAKE: A GEOGRAPHY OF PIRACY AND
PIRATES AS GEOGRAPHERS IN COLONIAL SPANISH
AMERICA, 1536-1718

Approved:

William V. Davidson
Major Professor and Chairman

Kathleen de la Peña McCool
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Kent Mathewson

Mike Richardson

Allen Peterson

Sam Hilliard

Robert A. Mullen

Date of Examination:

September 9, 1991
